

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, October 23, 2023

Karolina Hird, Christina Harward, Angelica Evans, Nicole Wolkov, and Mason Clark

October 23, 2023, 5:15pm ET

Click [here](#) to see ISW's interactive map of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

Click [here](#) to access ISW's archive of interactive time-lapse maps of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. These maps complement the static control-of-terrain map that ISW produces daily by showing a dynamic frontline. ISW will update this time-lapse map archive monthly.

Note: The data cut-off for this product was 1:30pm ET on October 23. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the October 24 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Russia's domestic production of artillery shells, supplemented by increased ammunition imports from North Korea, will likely allow Russian forces to sustain sufficient rates of artillery fire in Ukraine in 2024, albeit at a relatively lower level than during 2022. Estonian Defense Forces Intelligence Center Head Colonel Ants Kiviselg stated on October 20 that Russia still has around four million artillery shells remaining, which Russian forces can use for "low intensity" warfare for an additional year.[1] Kiviselg noted that there are reports that North Korea has shipped up to 1,000 containers of ammunition to Russia, each containing between 300-500 pieces of artillery ammunition.[2] Kiviselg estimated that North Korea may have therefore provided between 300,000-500,000 pieces of ammunition to Russia, which can last up to one month at the current daily rate of consumption of around 10,000 shells a day.[3] Ukrainian military analyst Colonel Petro Chernyk reported on October 23 that Russian forces are currently firing between 10,000-15,000 shells a day, significantly lower than rates of fire in summer 2022 of 45,000-80,000 shells per day.[4] However, Western sources and satellite imagery have confirmed that North Korean deliveries, likely mostly comprised of artillery shells, have drastically increased since Russian and North Korean authorities likely began more official military-technical cooperation in September, as ISW previously reported, and North Korea is likely to provide further deliveries.[5] Based on Western estimates of Russian artillery production capacity and continued North Korean artillery exports, Russia will likely be able to maintain generally sufficient rates of fire in the foreseeable future. While an overall decrease in Russian fire rates could impede the ability of Russian forces to conduct large scale offensive operations, Russian forces are unlikely to face widespread shortages which would chronically undermine defensive operations, and the drop in the rate of fire will not inherently provide Ukrainian forces an advantage. The degree to which Ukraine's international partners sustain Ukraine's ability to sustain an effective weight of fire relative to Russian forces will be a key determiner of respective capabilities in 2024.

Russian forces conducted another series of missile and drone strikes against Ukraine on the night of October 22 to 23. The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Russian forces launched 13 Shahed-131/136 drones, one unspecified drone, and one Kh-59 cruise missile and that Ukrainian forces destroyed all targets.[6] Ukrainian Southern Operational Command reported that Russian forces conducted nine airstrikes using an unspecified number of Kh-31 anti-radar air-to-

surface missiles.[7] Ukrainian Southern Operational Command also reported that Ukrainian forces shot down nine Shahed drones that Russian forces aimed at port infrastructure in Odesa Oblast.[8] Russian forces have routinely targeted port and grain infrastructure in Odesa Oblast, and Ukrainian officials reported that Russia will likely renew strikes against Ukrainian critical infrastructure in the fall and winter.[9] Russia will likely continue to target Ukrainian port and grain infrastructure in an attempt to disrupt Ukrainian grain exports as Russia tries to expand its own grain exports, most recently through a 2.7 trillion-ruble (about \$26.5 billion) grain contract with China signed on October 17.[10]

Ukrainian forces advanced south of Bakhmut on October 23 amid continued counteroffensive operations near Bakhmut and in western Zaporizhia

Oblast. Geolocated footage published on October 22 indicates that Ukrainian forces advanced across the railway line north of Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut), confirming prior statements by the Ukrainian General Staff and Russian milbloggers.[11] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Melitopol (western Zaporizhia Oblast) direction.[12]

The Russian government appears to be emphasizing defense spending over social programs in the 2024 federal budget despite contrary messaging intended to reassure the Russian populace. The United Kingdom Ministry of Defense (UK MoD) reported on October 23 that the Russian government’s proposed 2024 budget includes a 68 percent increase in planned defense spending compared to 2023, increasing defense spending to six percent of Russian GDP.[13] The UK MoD noted that the Russian government will likely spend more money on payments and healthcare costs for wounded servicemen, a large portion of whom will likely require lifelong medical care, and for families of Russian servicemen killed in combat. The UK MoD stated that consistently heightened military spending will likely contribute to greater inflation within Russia. The UK MoD added that the Russian government has not proposed increased civilian education or healthcare spending in the 2024 budget, effectively cutting those budgets considering inflation rates. Russian Finance Minister Anton Siluanov notably claimed on October 16 that the Russian 2024-2026 draft budget is “not a military budget” during a State Duma Budget and Tax Committee meeting.[14] Siluanov added that the fulfillment of social obligations is one of the highest priority areas of the Russian federal budget, 30.5 percent of which is allocated to social issues. Siluanov’s statement indicates that Russian authorities still feel the need to downplay increased defense spending ahead of the March 2024 Russian presidential elections due to concerns about how the Russian population views this issue and the war in Ukraine as a whole. ISW previously reported that Russian President Vladimir Putin reportedly intends to discuss the war in Ukraine as little as possible in political messaging leading up to the presidential election.[15] Russian authorities may increasingly highlight social spending over defense spending as the presidential election draws closer, despite the reality of increased defense spending.

Ukrainian Air Force Command Spokesperson Colonel Yuriy Ihnat stated on October 22 that the first group of Ukrainian pilots will begin training with instructors on F-16 fighter jets “in the near future.”[16] The pilots are currently training on F-16 simulators. *Politico* reported on October 13 that an unnamed US official stated that the pilots’ training may be accelerated due to Ukrainian forces’ urgent need for fighter jets.[17]

Key Takeaways:

- **Russia's domestic production of artillery shells, supplemented by increased ammunition imports from North Korea, will likely allow Russian forces to sustain sufficient rates of artillery fire in Ukraine in 2024, albeit at a relatively lower level than during 2022.**
- **Russian forces conducted offensive operations near Avdiivka and made confirmed advances northeast of Avdiivka.**
- **Russian sources claimed that Russian forces pushed Ukrainian forces back from some newly captured positions on the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast but noted that Ukrainian forces maintain a presence on the east bank.**
- **Russian forces conducted another series of missile and drone strikes against Ukraine on the night of October 22 to 23.**
- **Ukrainian forces advanced south of Bakhmut on October 23 amid continued counteroffensive operations near Bakhmut and in western Zaporizhia Oblast.**
- **The Russian government appears to be emphasizing defense spending over social programs in the 2024 federal budget despite contrary messaging intended to reassure the Russian populace.**
- **Ukrainian Air Force Command Spokesperson Colonel Yuriy Ihnat stated on October 22 that the first group of Ukrainian pilots will begin training with instructors on F-16 fighter jets “in the near future.”**
- **Russian forces conducted offensive operations near Kupyansk, along the Svatove-Kreminna line, near Bakhmut, south of Donetsk City, in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area, and in western Zaporizhia Oblast and made confirmed gains in some areas.**
- **Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu met with Russian Federation Council Speaker Valentina Matvienko and the Federation Committee on Defense and Security on October 23.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of October 23, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



We do not report in detail on Russian war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We will continue to evaluate and report on the effects of these criminal activities on the Ukrainian military and the Ukrainian population and specifically on combat in Ukrainian urban areas. We utterly condemn these Russian violations of the laws of armed conflict, Geneva Conventions, and humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

- Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine (comprised of two subordinate main efforts)
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and encircle northern Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis
- Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts
- Activities in Russian-occupied areas
- Russian Information Operations and Narratives

Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Luhansk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and northern Donetsk Oblast)

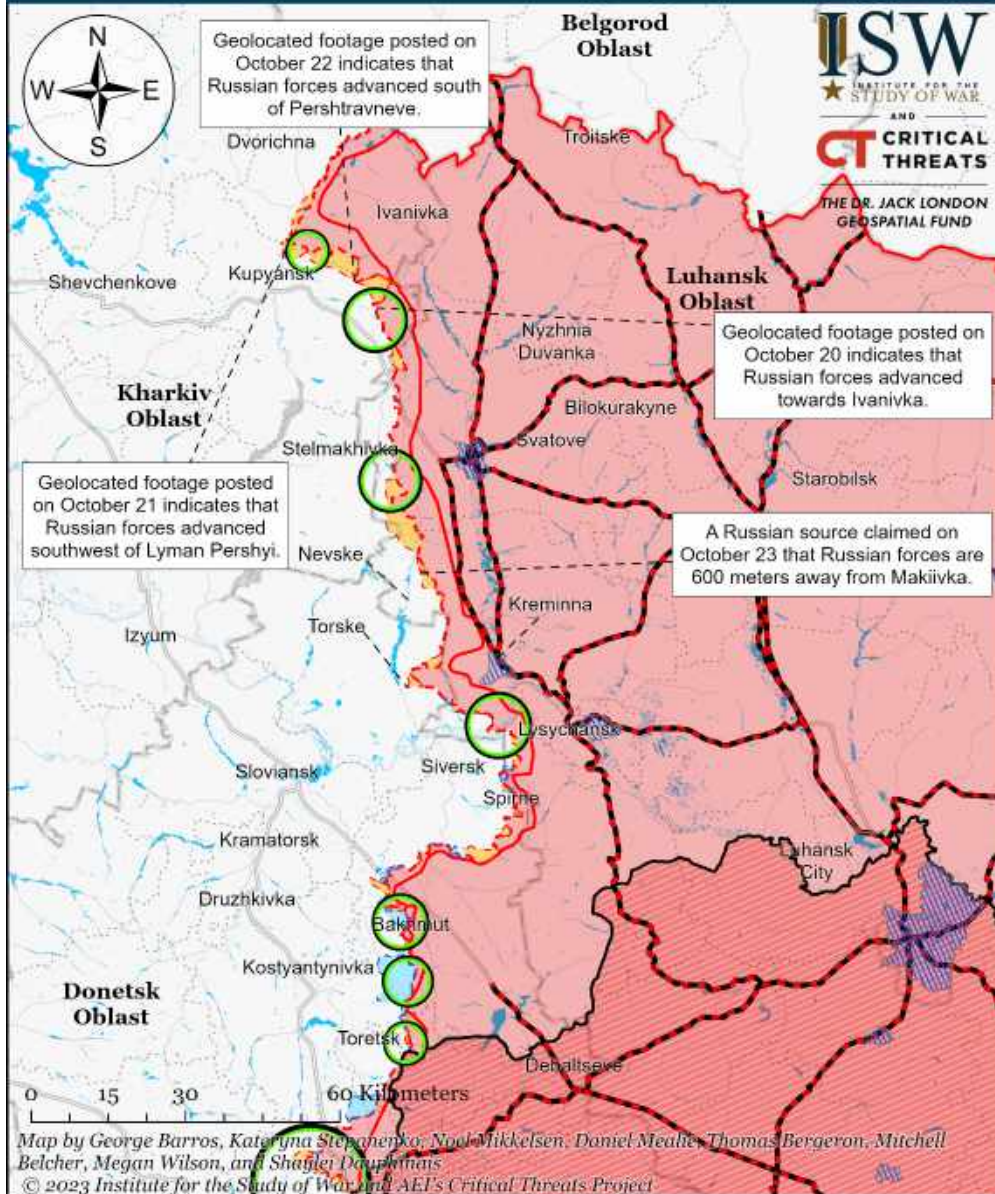
Russian forces conducted offensive operations near Kupyansk on October 23 and made a limited confirmed advance. Geolocated footage published on October 22 indicates that Russian forces marginally advanced southeast of Ivanivka (20km southeast of Kupyansk).[18] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces are slowly advancing toward Synkivka (8km northeast of Kupyansk) and Petropavlivka (7km east of Kupyansk).[19] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks near Synkivka and Ivanivka.[20] Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets stated that elements of the 15th Motorized Rifle Regiment (2nd Motorized Rifle Division) and 26th Tank Regiment (47th Tank Division) both of the 1st Guards Tank Army attacked near Ivanivka and Kyslivka (20km southeast of Kupyansk).[21] Mashovets stated that elements of the 138th and 25th Motorized Rifle Brigades (both of the 6th Combined Arms Army, Western Military District) unsuccessfully attacked near Synkivka.[22] Ukrainian “Steel Cordon” Border Guards Assault Brigade Spokesperson Ivan Shevtsov stated that Russian forces have changed their tactics and are conducting assaults with groups of up to 30 personnel without equipment in the Kupyansk direction, while Russian forces attack with 30 to 50 personnel using heavy equipment in the Lyman direction.[23]

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Kupyansk on October 23. The Russian MoD claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Synkivka and Ivanivka.[24] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked near Petropavlivka.[25]

Russian forces conducted offensive operations along the Svatove-Kreminna line on October 23 but did not make confirmed advances. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces are 600 meters away from Makiivka (20km southwest of Svatove), although ISW can only confirm that Russian forces hold positions within 2km from Svatove at their closest point.[26] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces made limited advances in the Serebryanske forest area (11km south of Kreminna) in the past week.[27] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks near Nadiya (15km west of Svatove) and the Serebryanske forest area.[28] A Russian milblogger claimed that fighting is ongoing in the Siversk direction (19km south of Kreminna).[29]

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked along the Svatove-Kreminna line on October 23. The Russian MoD and other Russian sources claimed that Russian forces repelled attacks near Nadiya, Novoyehorivka (16km southwest of Svatove), Hryhorivka (11km south of Kreminna), Dibrova (7km southwest of Kreminna) and in the Svyato-Pokrovske direction (23km southwest of Kreminna).[30]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of October 23, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



ISW
INSTITUTE FOR THE
STUDY OF WAR
AND
CT CRITICAL
THREATS
THE DR. JACK LONDON
GEOSPATIAL FUND

- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Russian Ground Lines of Communication
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory

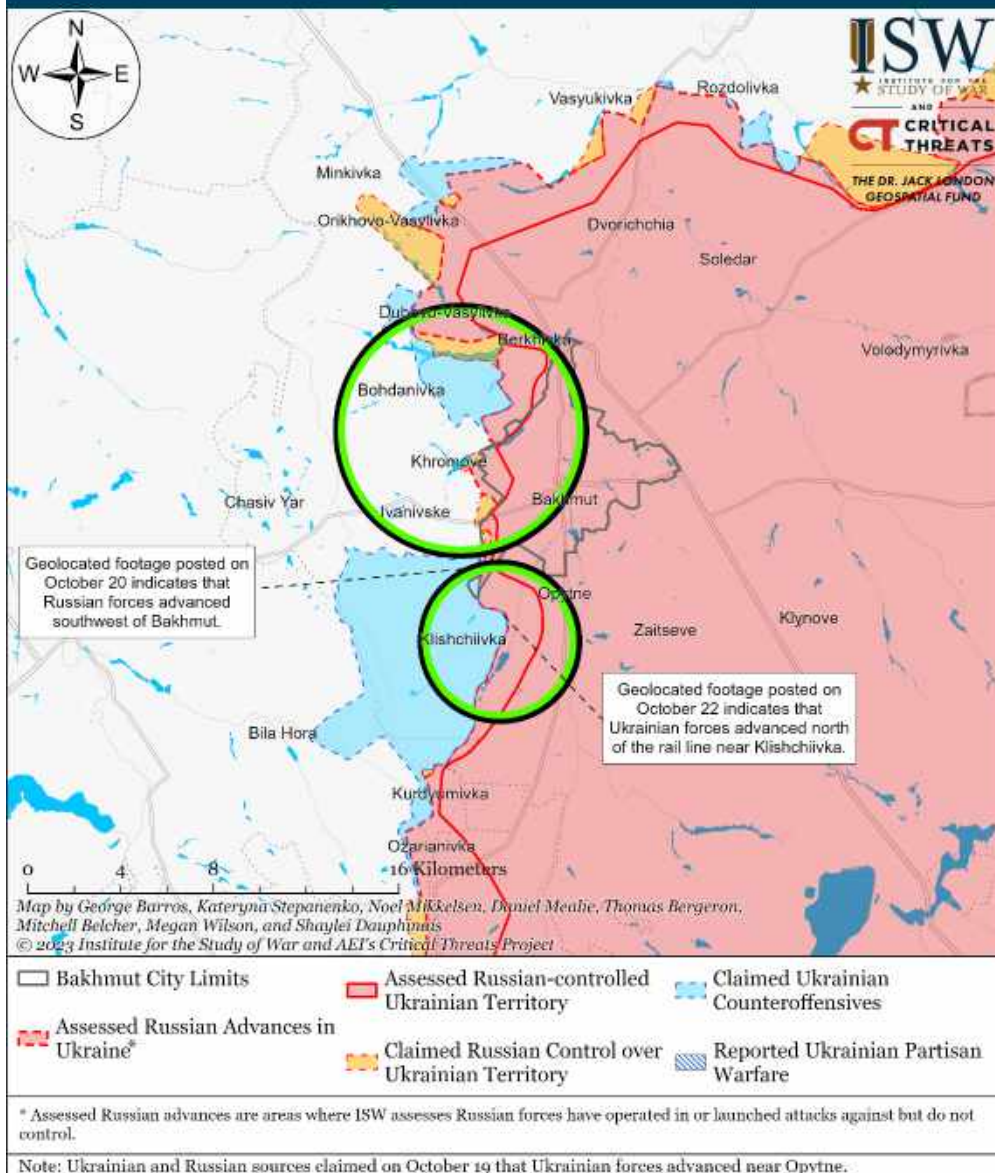
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Donetsk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)

Ukrainian forces conducted offensive operations near Bakhmut on October 23 and made confirmed advances. Geolocated footage published on October 22 indicates that Ukrainian forces advanced across the railway northeast of Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut), confirming prior statements made by both the Ukrainian General Staff and Russian milbloggers since October 18.[31] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive actions south of Bakhmut.[32] Russian sources continued to contest the fact that Ukrainian forces crossed the railway line and claimed on October 22 and 23 that Ukrainian unsuccessfully attempted to cross the railway near Klishchiivka, whereas other Russian milbloggers claimed on October 23 that Russian forces pushed Ukrainian forces away from the railway near Klishchiivka and Andriivka (10km southwest of Bakhmut).[33] Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces successfully counterattacked near Khromove (immediately west of Bakhmut) and in the direction of Bohdanivka (6km northwest of Bakhmut).[34] The Russian MoD claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Bohdanivka.[35] The Russian MoD also claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks and struck Ukrainian personnel and equipment concentration areas near the Berkhivka reservoir (about 2km northwest of Bakhmut) and Klishchiivka and in the Soledar direction northeast of Bakhmut.[36]

Russian forces conducted offensive operations near Bakhmut but did not make any claimed or confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Bohdanivka, Khromove, Ivanivske (6km west of Bakhmut), Klishchiivka, Andriivka, and Druzhba (18km southwest of Bakhmut).[37] Russian and Ukrainian sources stated that Russian forces attacked east of Klishchiivka, near Andriivka and Khromove, and in the direction of Bohdanivka.[38] A Russian milblogger claimed on October 22 that Russian forces persistently attacked near Klishchiivka and Andriivka in the past week but struggled to push Ukrainian forces back from the railway due to Ukrainian control of the heights in the area.[39] Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets stated on October 23 that elements of the Russian 1428th Territorial Defense Motorized Rifle Regiment, 83rd Guards Air Assault (VDV) Brigade, and 4th Separate Motorized Rifle Brigade (2nd Luhansk People's Republic [LNR] Army Corps) are operating near Klishchiivka and Andriivka.[40] Chechen Republic Head Ramzan Kadyrov claimed that elements of the Russian 346th Spetsnaz Brigade (Russian General Staff Main Directorate [GRU]), 4th Separate Motorized Rifle Brigade of the 2nd LNR Army Corps, and Chechen “Akhmat” Spetsnaz forces are operating near Andriivka and that elements of the Russian 57th Motorized Rifle Regiment (6th Motorized Rifle Division, 3rd Army Corps, Western Military District) and Chechen “Akhmat” Spetsnaz forces are operating in the Kurdyumivka (13km southwest of Bakhmut) direction.[41] A Russian milblogger claimed that elements of the Russian 98th VDV Division are operating east of Khromove.[42]

Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of October 23, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

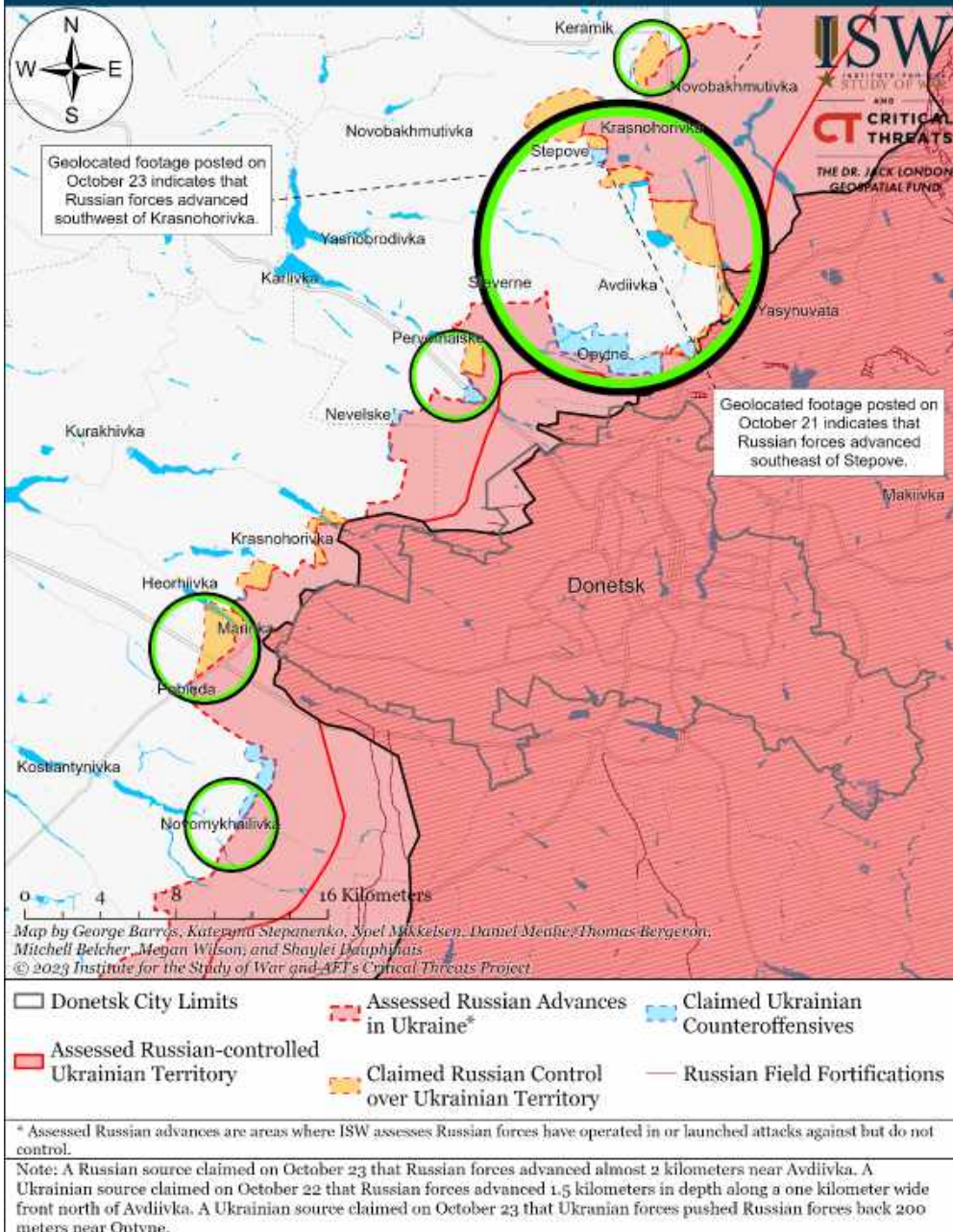


Russian forces conducted offensive operations near Avdiivka and made confirmed advances on October 23. Geolocated footage published on October 23 indicates that Russian forces advanced southwest of Krasnohorivka (5km northeast of Avdiivka).[43] Russian sources claimed that Russian forces have advanced almost two kilometers in the Avdiivka area in the past few days.[44] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced near Pervomaiske (11km southwest of Avdiivka) and to the railway line north of the waste heap area northwest of Avdiivka.[45] A Ukrainian source stated that the waste heap is a contested “gray zone,” and a Russian milblogger claimed on October 22 that Russian forces are unable to take control of the waste heap due to heavy Ukrainian artillery fire.[46] Another Russian milblogger claimed on October 22 that Russian forces broke through to the waste heap and railway near Stepove (8km northwest of Avdiivka) and pushed Ukrainian forces back

near Sieverne (6km west of Avdiivka) and Spartak (4km south of Avdiivka) in the past week.[47] A Ukrainian source stated on October 23 that Russian forces, including elements of the Russian 9th Motorized Rifle Brigade (Donetsk People's Republic [DNR] 1st Army Corps), 110th Motorized Rifle Brigade (DNR 1st Army Corps), and 55th Motorized Rifle Brigade (41st Combined Arms Army, Central Military District), advanced near Optyne (4km south of Avdiivka) and Vodyane (7km southwest of Avdiivka).[48] Mashovets stated that elements of the Russian 1st Motorized Rifle Brigade and 9th Motorized Rifle Brigade (both of the DNR 1st Army Corps) pushed Ukrainian forces 200 meters back near Opytne (4km south of Avdiivka) and that elements of the 114th Motorized Rifle Brigade (DNR 1st Army Corps) gained a foothold west of Krasnohorivka.[49] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces attacked near Stepove, Novokalynove (7km north of Avdiivka), Sieverne, and south of Avdiivka.[50] Ukrainian sources, including the Ukrainian General Staff, reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Keramik (10km northwest of Avdiivka), Stepove, Tonenke (5km west of Avdiivka), Avdiivka, Opytne, Pervomaiske, and south of the Tsarska Okhota restaurant south of Avdiivka.[51] A Russian milblogger claimed that elements of the Russian MoD-controlled "Redut" private military company (PMC) are operating in the Avdiivka area.[52] A Ukrainian source stated that Russian forces are forming assault groups, including elements of the Russian 106th VDV Division and the 1st Army Corps.[53] Mashovets stated that elements of the Russian 21st Motorized Rifle Brigade (2nd Combined Arms Army) were also redeployed from the Lyman direction to the Avdiivka area.[54]

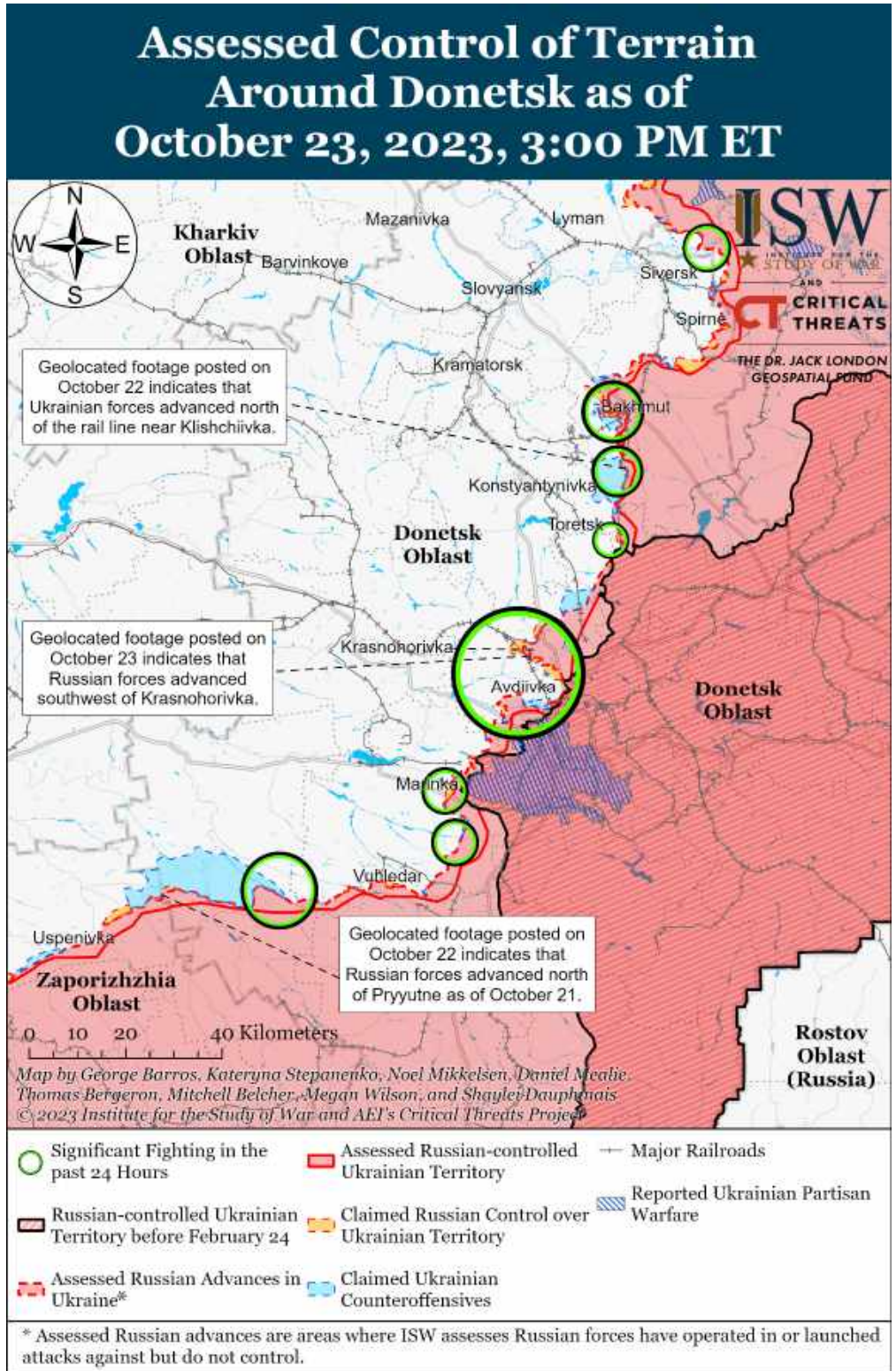
Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked near Avdiivka on October 23 but did not make any claimed or confirmed advances. Russian sources claimed on October 22 and 23 that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked near the waste heap northwest of Avdiivka, Pisky (8km southwest of Donetsk City), Vodyane, Opytne, and Pervomaiske.[55] A Russian milblogger continued to deny claims of Ukrainian advances near Pisky and Opytne on October 23.[56] Another Russian milblogger claimed on October 22 that Ukrainian forces advanced near Pisky in the past week.[57]

Assessed Control of Terrain near Donetsk City as of October 23, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Russian forces conducted offensive operations southwest of Donetsk City on October 23 but did not make any confirmed advances. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced near Nevelske (directly west of Donetsk City) and attacked near Novomykhailivka (10km southwest of Donetsk City) and in Marinka.[58] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Marinka, Nevelske, Pobieda (5km southwest of Donetsk City), and Novomykhailivka.[59] A Russian milblogger claimed that positional battles are ongoing near Marinka, Novomykhailivka, and Vuhledar (30km southwest of Donetsk City).[60]

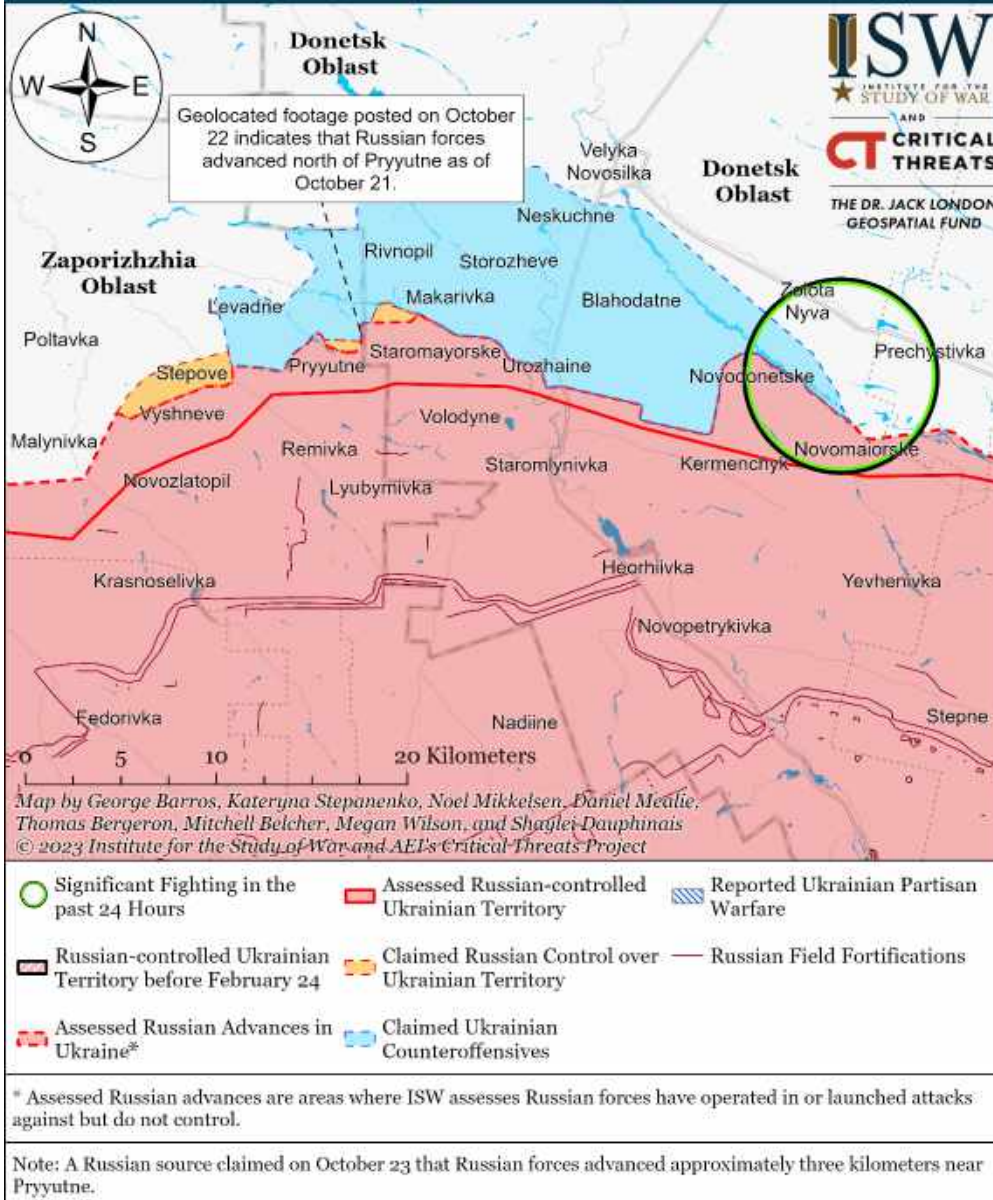
Ukrainian forces did not conduct any claimed or confirmed ground attacks southwest of Donetsk City on October 23.



Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions and secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes)

Russian forces continued ground attacks in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast area on October 23 and made confirmed gains. Geolocated footage posted on October 22 shows that Russian forces have marginally advanced north of Pryytne (15km southwest of Velyka Novosilka).[61] Several Russian sources claimed that Russian forces counterattacked and advanced nearly 3 kilometers near Pryytne, although the available geolocated footage only confirms that Russian forces have advanced less than a kilometer in the area.[62] Russian milbloggers also claimed that Russian forces attempted to improve their tactical positions near Novodonetske (11km southeast of Velyka Novosilka), Novomayorske (18km southeast of Velyka Novosilka), and Urozhaine (10km south of Velyka Novosilka).[63] A Russian milblogger posted footage purportedly of the Russian 40th Naval Infantry Brigade (Pacific Fleet) operating near Novomayorske.[64] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks southeast of Velyka Novosilka near Zolota Nyva and Prechystivka, 11km and 18km southeast of Velyka Novosilka respectively.[65]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around the Vremivka Salient as of October 23, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted ground attacks in the Donetsk-Zaporizhzhia Oblast border area on October 23 and reportedly made a limited advance. One milblogger claimed that Ukrainian attacks forced Russian troops out of some positions near Novodonetske.[66] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Russian forces stopped a Ukrainian troop rotation near Novomayorske.[67]

Russian forces conducted counterattacks in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast on October 23 and reportedly restored some lost positions. The Ukrainian General Staff stated that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful ground attacks near Robotyne, Verbove (10km east of Robotyne), and southeast of Mala Tokmachka (10km northeast of Robotyne).[68] Zaporizhzhia Oblast occupation deputy Vladimir Rogov claimed that Russian forces launched a counterattack near Verbove and retook several strongholds.[69] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces counterattacked northwest of Robotyne and near Verbove.[70] The Russian MoD posted footage of the 7th Guards Mountain Air Assault Division operating a TOS-1A thermobaric artillery system near Verbove.[71]



Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast on October 23 but did not make any claimed or confirmed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian troops are continuing offensive operations in the Melitopol (western Zaporizhzhia) direction.[72] The

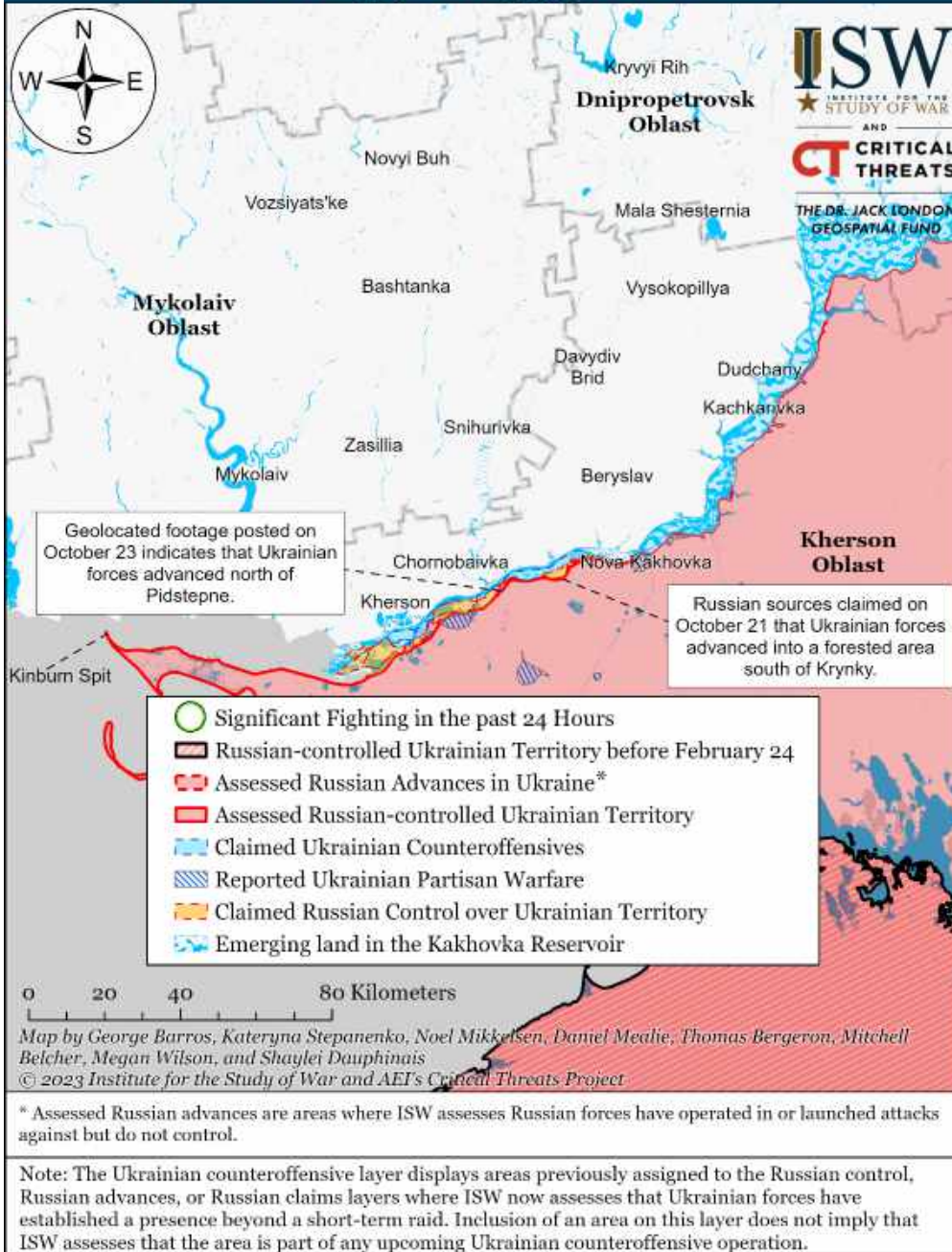
Russian MoD claimed that Russian forces repelled a Ukrainian attack near Robotyne.[73] Several Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces launched attacks on the Robotyne-Verbove line and northwest of Robotyne towards Kopani (5km northwest of Robotyne), but that Russian forces repelled the attacks.[74] A Russian milblogger claimed that localized and positional attacks are ongoing west of Robotyne in the Zhrebryanky-Pyatykhatky sector of the front.[75]



Russian sources claimed that Russian forces pushed Ukrainian forces back from some newly captured Ukrainian positions on the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast but noted that Ukrainian forces still maintain a presence on the east bank. Two prominent Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces counterattacked and pushed Ukrainian troops back from positions in Krynyky (30km east of Kherson City and 2km from the Dnipro River).[76] Geolocated footage posted on October 23 confirms that Ukrainian forces advanced to positions north of Pidstepne (20km east of Kherson City and 3km

from the Dnipro River).[77] Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces continue to operate on the east bank between Krynky and Pidstepne and warned that Ukrainian troops hope to break through the Pidstepne-Pishchanivka line towards Oleshky (5km directly southeast of Kherson City).[78] Ukrainian military observer Konstantyn Mashovets noted that Russian forces appear to be constructing a "mobile tactical reserve" group comprised of motorized rifle units and battalions of various private military companies (PMCs) in the Oleshky area to quickly deploy small groups into contested areas on the east bank.[79] Mashovets also reported that Russia is laterally redeploying elements of the 58th Combined Arms Army (Southern Military District) away from the western Zaporizhia direction to Kherson Oblast, indicating that the Russian command sees Ukrainian actions on the east bank as a substantial threat.[80]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of October 23, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts (Russian objective: Expand combat power without conducting general mobilization)

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu met with Russian Federation Council Speaker Valentina Matvienko and the Federation Committee on Defense and Security on October 23.[81] Shoigu and the

senators discussed the “most pressing issues of supporting” the war in Ukraine, including fulfilling budgetary targets weapons and equipment supply, supporting Russian servicemen and their families, and other unspecified legislative initiatives. Shoigu emphasized the importance of Russian defense-industrial base (DIB) enterprises in meeting the needs of the Russian military.

Ukrainian Luhansk Oblast Military Administration Head Artem Lysohor stated on October 23 that occupation authorities are mobilizing full-time university students in occupied Luhansk Oblast.[82] Lysohor stated that occupation authorities forced students from the Donbas State Technical University in occupied Alchevsk, Luhansk Oblast to take academic leave to serve with the Russian military.

The Ukrainian General Staff reported on October 23 that occupation police are searching occupied Nova Kakhovka, Kherson Oblast for up to 60 Russian servicemen who reportedly deserted their posts.[83]

Activities in Russian-occupied areas (Russian objective: Consolidate administrative control of annexed areas; forcibly integrate Ukrainian citizens into Russian sociocultural, economic, military, and governance systems)

The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported on October 23 that occupation collaborators, university administrators, and members of pro-Kremlin organizations are forcing civilians to donate blood in occupied Donetsk Oblast, likely to transfuse into wounded Russian servicemen fighting near Avdiivka.[84]

Russian Information Operations and Narratives

Russian authorities are increasing the number of convictions and intensifying punishments for individuals found guilty of spreading "false information" about or "discrediting" the Russian military. Russian news outlet *Kommersant* reported on October 23 that Russian courts convicted 21 people of spreading false information about the Russian military in the first six months of 2023 in comparison to 14 total convictions in 2022.[85] *Kommersant* also noted that Russian courts imprisoned eight people in 2023 for spreading false information about the Russian military, whereas Russian courts only imprisoned two people on the same charge in 2022.[86] *Kommersant* reported that Russian courts fined and convicted three people of discrediting the Russian military in 2022, whereas Russian courts have convicted 15 people on the same charge and sentenced two of them to imprisonment in 2023.[87]

Significant activity in Belarus (Russian efforts to increase its military presence in Belarus and further integrate Belarus into Russian-favorable frameworks and Wagner Group activity in Belarus)

The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported on October 23 that Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) officers accused the Belarusian defense-industrial base (DIB) of disrupting the supply of equipment to the Russian military.[88] Russian authorities are reportedly concerned that Belarus is prioritizing supplying materiel to other countries, such as Iran, and are demanding Belarusian DIB companies prioritize Russia.

Note: ISW does not receive any classified material from any source, uses only publicly available information, and draws extensively on Russian, Ukrainian, and Western reporting and social media as well as commercially available satellite imagery and other geospatial data as the basis for these reports. References to all sources used are provided in the endnotes of each update.

POWERED BY:



BABELSTREET

[1] <https://news.err dot ee/1609139906/edf-colonel-russia-still-has-four-million-artillery-shells-left>

[2] <https://news.err dot ee/1609139906/edf-colonel-russia-still-has-four-million-artillery-shells-left>

[3] <https://news.err dot ee/1609139906/edf-colonel-russia-still-has-four-million-artillery-shells-left> ; <https://twitter.com/RALee85/status/1715836719071686908> ; <https://twitter.com/shashj/status/1715817353760366746>

[4] <https://armyinform.com dot ua/2023/10/23/snaryady-shho-kndr-nadala-rosiyi-ne-vplynut-na-perebig-vijny-petro-chernyk/>

[5] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar100823> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar091723> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar091623> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar091223> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar091123> ; <https://beyondparallel.csis.org/dramatic-increase-in-dprk-russia-border-rail-traffic-after-kim-putin-summit/> ; <https://twitter.com/jseldin/status/1712868618864558298?s=20>

[6] <https://t.me/kpszsu/6655>

[7] https://t.me/SJTF_Odes/1826

[8] https://t.me/SJTF_Odes/1824 ; <https://www.facebook.com/OperationalCommandSouth/posts/pfbid02w9gnrQQAXm1KnRZY5cBKkWdFVsPZiVPcK7sJAKR14AXEtwvWrXs7taF1jKExEueWl>

[9] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar100223> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar091723> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar090723> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar082323> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar101323> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar100823>

[10] <https://iz dot ru/1591553/sofia-smirnova/zernyshko-k-zernyshku-rossiia-i-kitai-dogovorilis-o-krupneishei-postavke-zernovykh>

[11] <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/55405> ; <https://x.com/moklasen/status/1716194918782144574?s=20>

[12] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidOrHP1Cxx1y4H74Rh5cQcxtfuDqPfWbZbYfyFquqRD8m2pzT38KfsB1MZvr5h5fPzjl>

- [13] <https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1716331191895212156>
- [14] <https://tass dot ru/ekonomika/19025979>; <https://meduza dot io/news/2023/10/16/siluanov-skazal-cto-rossiyskiy-byudzhnet-ne-voenny-a-sotsialny-i-poobeschal-tri-goda-ne-povyshat-nalogi> ; https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Oct%2016%20Russian%20Offensive%20Campaign%20Assessment%20PDF_o.pdf
- [15] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar100323>
- [16] <https://suspilne dot media/599721-ukrainski-piloti-najblizim-casom-peresadut-z-trenazeriv-na-f-16-ignat/>
- [17] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar101423>
- [18] <https://twitter.com/EjShahid/status/1716134758139244674>;
<https://twitter.com/EjShahid/status/1716135332754726974>;
<https://twitter.com/EjShahid/status/1716130911748583884>;
<https://twitter.com/EjShahid/status/1716131726236270949>; https://t.me/kraken_kha/452;
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Uycq6ivHCo;
<https://twitter.com/EjShahid/status/1716161227242516662>;
<https://twitter.com/EjShahid/status/1716162851784610175>; <https://t.me/ButusovPlus/5743>;
- [19] https://t.me/boris_rozhin/101720; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/51479>
- [20] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidOrHP1Cxx1y4H74Rh5cQcxtfuDqPfWbZbYfyFquqRD8m2pzT38KfsB1MZvr5h5fPzjl> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02bcQwVKWVrqcbbubzqhYo2mDVaM71T5e1jxSkwLdKAJwoUhehPqvAscLDuFpsEjSiTl>
; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02YLw9kvgyxdlL7FSv4Qw4LkLxRdfTtGWQMaJWCab19hBmsMMf4BvQNCrXXgTERv7tl>
- [21] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1338>
- [22] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1338>
- [23] https://suspilne dot media/599895-ukrainski-piloti-skoro-peresadut-z-trenazeriv-na-f-16-rf-cilodobovo-obstrilue-avdiivku-607-den-vijni-onlajn/?anchor=live_1698048990&utm_source=copylink&utm_medium=ps
- [24] https://t.me/mod_russia/31742
- [25] https://t.me/boris_rozhin/101720; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/51479>
- [26] https://t.me/notes_veterans/13074
- [27] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15962>
- [28] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02bcQwVKWVrqcbbubzqhYo2mDVaM71T5e1jxSkwLdKAJwoUhehPqvAscLDuFpsEjSiTl>

; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02YLw9kvgyxDLL7FSv4Qw4LkLxRdfTtGWQMaJWCab19hBmsMMf4BvQNcRXXgTERv7tl> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidorHP1Cxx1y4H74Rh5cQcxtfuDqPfWbZbYfyFquqRD8m2pzT38KfsB1MZvr5h5fPzjl>

[29] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15962>

[30] https://t.me/russian_airborne/2308
; https://t.me/vdv_ZA_teplinsky/208 ; https://t.me/mod_russia/31742 ;
https://t.me/mod_russia/31747

[31] <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/55405> ; <https://x.com/moklasen/status/1716194918782144574?s=20> ;
<https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-18-2023> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-19-2023>

[32] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02bcQwVKWVrqcbbubzqhYo2mDVaM71T5e1jxSkwLdKAJwoUhehPqvAscLDuFpsEjSiTl> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02YLw9kvgyxDLL7FSv4Qw4LkLxRdfTtGWQMaJWCab19hBmsMMf4BvQNcRXXgTERv7tl>

[33] <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4215> ; https://t.me/boris_rozhin/101720; <https://t.me/voenkorkotenok/51479> ; https://t.me/ruskiy_opolchenec/38400 ; https://t.me/evgeniy_lisitsyn/6225 ;
https://t.me/dva_majors/27856

[34] https://t.me/russian_airborne/2308 ; https://t.me/vdv_ZA_teplinsky/208

[35] https://t.me/mod_russia/31742 ; https://t.me/mod_russia/31748

[36] https://t.me/mod_russia/31740

[37] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidorHP1Cxx1y4H74Rh5cQcxtfuDqPfWbZbYfyFquqRD8m2pzT38KfsB1MZvr5h5fPzjl> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02bcQwVKWVrqcbbubzqhYo2mDVaM71T5e1jxSkwLdKAJwoUhehPqvAscLDuFpsEjSiTl> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02YLw9kvgyxDLL7FSv4Qw4LkLxRdfTtGWQMaJWCab19hBmsMMf4BvQNcRXXgTERv7tl>

[38] https://t.me/russian_airborne/2308 ; https://t.me/vdv_ZA_teplinsky/208 ; <https://t.me/wargonzo/15966> ; <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1338>

[39] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15962>

[40] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1338>

[41] https://t.me/RKadyrov_95/4026 ; https://t.me/RKadyrov_95/4028

[42] <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4215>

[43] <https://t.me/sssternenko/21823>; <https://x.com/foosint/status/1716450276658270589?s=20>; <https://x.com/foosint/status/1716450503771447585?s=20>

[44] https://t.me/russkiy_opolchenec/38400 ; https://t.me/evgeniy_lisitsyn/6225

[45] https://t.me/dva_majors/27856 ; <https://t.me/wargonzo/15966> ; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4206> ; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4218> ; https://t.me/russkiy_opolchenec/38400 ; https://t.me/evgeniy_lisitsyn/6225

[46] <https://www.facebook.com/butusov.yuriy/posts/pfbid02wRjC2cy38Nq6JXcY7AWUk1xfpUWVnUDVH8dEdLVmqe04xRusV6TVVDhCEz8k1m6pl> ; https://t.me/boris_rozhin/101720

[47] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15962>

[48] <https://www.facebook.com/butusov.yuriy/posts/pfbid02wRjC2cy38Nq6JXcY7AWUk1xfpUWVnUDVH8dEdLVmqe04xRusV6TVVDhCEz8k1m6pl>

[49] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1338>

[50] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15966>

[51] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0rHP1Cxx1y4H74Rh5cQcxtfuDqPfWbZbYfyFquqRD8m2pzT38KfsB1MZvr5h5fPzjl> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02bcQwVKWrcbbubzqhYo2mDVaM71T5e1jxSkwLdKAJwoUhehPqvAscLDuFpsEjSiTl> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02YLw9kvgyxdLL7FSv4Qw4LkLxRdfTtGWQMaJWCab19hBmsMMf4BvQNcRXXgTERv7tl> ; <https://www.facebook.com/butusov.yuriy/posts/pfbid02wRjC2cy38Nq6JXcY7AWUk1xfpUWVnUDVH8dEdLVmqe04xRusV6TVVDhCEz8k1m6pl> ; <https://www.facebook.com/butusov.yuriy/posts/pfbid02wRjC2cy38Nq6JXcY7AWUk1xfpUWVnUDVH8dEdLVmqe04xRusV6TVVDhCEz8k1m6pl> ; <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1338>

[52] https://t.me/Sladkov_plus/8904

[53] <https://www.facebook.com/butusov.yuriy/posts/pfbid02wRjC2cy38Nq6JXcY7AWUk1xfpUWVnUDVH8dEdLVmqe04xRusV6TVVDhCEz8k1m6pl>

[54] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1338>

[55] <https://t.me/rezervsvo/34478> ; <https://twitter.com/GirkinGirkin/status/1716086493297480022> / ; <https://t.me/GnqmDghzwl05ZTQy/4605> ; https://t.me/dva_majors/27872 ; https://t.me/negumanitarnaya_pomosch_Z/11571

[56] https://t.me/dva_majors/27856 ; https://t.me/Sladkov_plus/8904

[57] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15962>

[58] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15966>

[59] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0rHP1Cxx1y4H74Rh5cQcxtfuDqPfWbZbYfyFquqRD8m2pzT38KfsB1MZvr5h5fPzjl> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02bcQwVKWrcbbubzqhYo2mDVaM71T5e1jxSkwLdKAJwoUhehPqvAscLDuFpsEjSiTl> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02YLw9kvgyxdLL7FSv4Qw4LkLxRdfTtGWQMaJWCab19hBmsMMf4BvQNcRXXgTERv7tl>

[60] <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/51479>; https://t.me/boris_rozhin/101720

[61] <https://t.me/AFUStratCom/20664>; https://t.me/WarArchive_ua/6497; <https://x.com/GermanObserver1/status/1716201843527733450?s=20>

[62] https://t.me/russkiy_opolchenec/38400; https://t.me/evgeniy_lisitsyn/6225; https://t.me/rea_dovkanews/68222; <https://t.me/wargonzo/15962>; https://t.me/voin_dv/5599

[63] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15966>; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/51479>; https://t.me/boris_rozhin/101720

[64] https://t.me/voin_dv/5603

[65] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02bcQwVKWVrqbbubzqhYo2mDVaM71T5e1jxSkwLdKAJwoUhehPqvAscLDuFpsEjSiTl>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02YLw9kvgyxdLL7FSv4Qw4LkLxRdfTtGWQMaJWCab19hBmsMMf4BvQNCrXXgTERv7tl>; <https://www.facebook.com/PresscentrTavria/posts/pfbid027Dxmm8mgaVwNEpzJMALmP45cBxcHVCfvXCPb4j5ETG5k6kJFnk29r5iRFipiZC9ql>

[66] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15962>

[67] https://t.me/mod_russia/31738

[68] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0rHP1Cxx1y4H74Rh5cQextfuDqPfWbZbYfyFquqRD8m2pzT38KfsB1MZvr5h5fPzjl>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02bcQwVKWVrqbbubzqhYo2mDVaM71T5e1jxSkwLdKAJwoUhehPqvAscLDuFpsEjSiTl>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02YLw9kvgyxdLL7FSv4Qw4LkLxRdfTtGWQMaJWCab19hBmsMMf4BvQNCrXXgTERv7tl>; <https://www.facebook.com/PresscentrTavria/posts/pfbid027Dxmm8mgaVwNEpzJMALmP45cBxcHVCfvXCPb4j5ETG5k6kJFnk29r5iRFipiZC9ql>

[69] <https://t.me/vrogov/12592>

[70] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15966>

[71] https://t.me/mod_russia/31733

[72] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02bcQwVKWVrqbbubzqhYo2mDVaM71T5e1jxSkwLdKAJwoUhehPqvAscLDuFpsEjSiTl>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02YLw9kvgyxdLL7FSv4Qw4LkLxRdfTtGWQMaJWCab19hBmsMMf4BvQNCrXXgTERv7tl>; <https://www.facebook.com/PresscentrTavria/posts/pfbid027Dxmm8mgaVwNEpzJMALmP45cBxcHVCfvXCPb4j5ETG5k6kJFnk29r5iRFipiZC9ql>

[73] https://t.me/mod_russia/31743; https://t.me/mod_russia/31750

[74] https://t.me/russian_airborne/2308; https://t.me/vdv_ZA_teplinsky/208; <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/55414>; https://t.me/basurin_e/6445; <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/55406>; https://t.me/dva_maj

ors/27856; <https://t.me/readovkanews/68222>; <https://t.me/frontbird/4132> ; https://t.me/dva_majors/27893

[75] <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/51479>; https://t.me/boris_rozhin/101720

[76] <https://t.me/rybar/53534>; https://t.me/dva_majors/27856

[77] <https://t.me/vysokygovorit/13228> ; <https://x.com/giK1893/status/1716388621412974652?s=20> ; <https://x.com/giK1893/status/1716389012863164504?s=20>; <https://t.me/wargonzo/15978> ; <https://x.com/foosint/status/1716393905522872486?s=20>

[78] <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4219>; <https://t.me/wargonzo/15978>; https://t.me/dva_majors/27856; <https://t.me/rybar/53534>

[79] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1337>

[80] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1337>

[81] https://t.me/mod_russia/31751 ; https://t.me/mod_russia/31753 ; https://t.me/mod_russia/31755

[82] <https://t.me/luhanskaVTSA/14492>

[83] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2bcQwVKWrqcbubzqhYo2mDVaM71T5e1jxSkwLdKAJwoUehPqvAscLDuFpsEjSiTl> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2YLw9kvgyxDLL7FSv4Qw4LkLxRdfTtGWQMaJWCab19hBmsMMf4BvQNCrXXgTERv7tl>

[84] <https://sprotyv.mod.gov dot ua/rosiyany-zmushuyut-meshkantsiv-tot-zdavaty-krov-okupantam/>

[85] <https://www.kommersant dot ru/doc/6295801>; <https://meduza dot io/news/2023/10/23/kommersant-v-2023-godu-v-rossii-stali-chasche-sudit-za-feyki-o-rossiyskoy-armii-i-davat-realnye-sroki-za-povtornuyu-diskreditatsiyu-voennyh> ; <https://www.severreal dot org/a/v-rossii-v-poltora-raza-vyroslo-chislo-prigovorov-za-voennye-feyki-/32649656.html?nocache=1> ; <https://t.me/severrealii/20861>

[86] <https://www.kommersant dot ru/doc/6295801>; <https://meduza dot io/news/2023/10/23/kommersant-v-2023-godu-v-rossii-stali-chasche-sudit-za-feyki-o-rossiyskoy-armii-i-davat-realnye-sroki-za-povtornuyu-diskreditatsiyu-voennyh> ; <https://www.severreal dot org/a/v-rossii-v-poltora-raza-vyroslo-chislo-prigovorov-za-voennye-feyki-/32649656.html?nocache=1> ; <https://t.me/severrealii/20861>

[87] <https://www.kommersant dot ru/doc/6295801>; <https://meduza dot io/news/2023/10/23/kommersant-v-2023-godu-v-rossii-stali-chasche-sudit-za-feyki-o-rossiyskoy-armii-i-davat-realnye-sroki-za-povtornuyu-diskreditatsiyu-voennyh> ; <https://www.severreal dot org/a/v-rossii-v-poltora-raza-vyroslo-chislo-prigovorov-za-voennye-feyki-/32649656.html?nocache=1> ; <https://t.me/severrealii/20861>

[88] <https://sprotyv dot mod.gov.ua/moskva-nezadovolena-biloruskym-vpk/>

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, October 22, 2023

Karolina Hird, Angelica Evans, Christina Harward, Riley Bailey, and Mason Clark

October 22, 2023, 4:45pm ET

Click [here](#) to see ISW's interactive map of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

Click [here](#) to access ISW's archive of interactive time-lapse maps of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. These maps complement the static control-of-terrain map that ISW produces daily by showing a dynamic frontline. ISW will update this time-lapse map archive monthly.

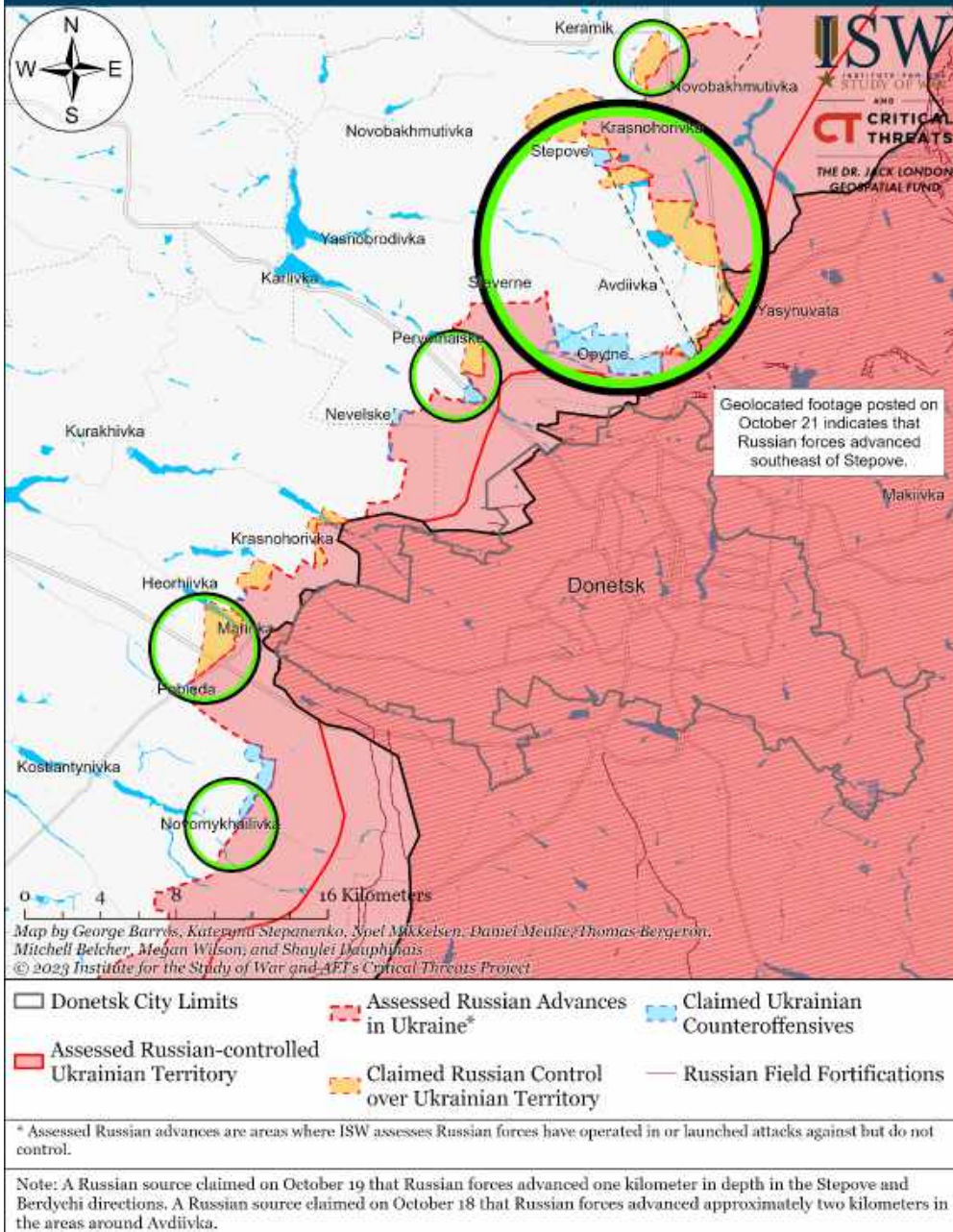
Note: The data cut-off for this product was 12:30pm ET on October 22. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the October 23 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Russian forces are funneling additional forces to the Avdiivka front despite ongoing challenges with frontal mechanized assaults and the failure of a renewed push on October 19-20. Several Russian milbloggers claimed that there were no significant changes along the front in the Avdiivka direction on October 22.[1] Russian forces are likely once again pausing following a failed major push which suffered heavy losses. A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces “unexpectedly” counterattacked in the direction of Pisky (8km southwest of Donetsk City) and pushed Russian forces from positions in the area. Another milblogger stated that claims of Ukrainian advances near Pisky and Opytne (4km south of Avdiivka) are false.[2] Another Russian source allegedly serving in the Avdiivka direction claimed that Ukrainian forces did not conduct counterattacks in his unspecified sector of the front.[3] Geolocated footage published on October 21 indicates that Russian forces recently made marginal advances southeast of Pervomaiske (11km southwest of Avdiivka).[4] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces have not completely cleared the Avdiivka waste heap area and that the area is currently a contested “gray zone.”[5]

A Kremlin-affiliated milblogger discussed difficulties that may be contributing to a “positional deadlock” for Russian offensive operations in the Avdiivka direction as of October 22.[6] The milblogger claimed that it is difficult to conduct maneuver warfare on a static front line with a large number of personnel and fortified areas on both sides. The milblogger noted that Ukrainian drones and other precision weapons have made armored vehicles increasingly vulnerable and have made ground attacks increasingly difficult. The milblogger also noted that Russian forces are facing difficulties in overcoming Ukrainian minefields near Avdiivka and are unable to completely destroy Ukrainian logistics, allowing the Ukrainian command to quickly transfer personnel to critical areas. Russian sources have previously claimed that Ukrainian defensive fortifications pose a significant challenge to Russian advances around Avdiivka.[7] These challenges are highly similar to those faced by Ukrainian forces in southern Ukraine in the initial weeks of the ongoing Ukrainian counteroffensive in June 2023. However, it remains to be seen if Russian forces have the capabilities and flexibility to adapt in some manner, as Ukrainian forces did following early setbacks in June 2023.

Ukrainian sources stated that Russian forces continue to transfer personnel to the Avdiivka direction to support offensive efforts despite heavy losses. Ukrainian Tavriisk Group of Forces Spokesperson Colonel Oleksandr Shtupun stated that the Russian military is deploying personnel from Russian territory directly to the Avdiivka direction to replace personnel losses.[8] Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets stated that the Russian military command has recently transferred several Russian regiments comprised of mobilized personnel to the Avdiivka direction, indicating that Russia likely does not plan to abandon operations in this direction.[9] Mashovets noted that the Russian military also transferred elements of the 57th Motorized Rifle Regiment (6th Motorized Rifle Division, 3rd Army Corps, Western Military District) to the Spartak-Yakolivka-Minerale-Kashtanove area (4km south to 5km southeast of Avdiivka).

Assessed Control of Terrain near Donetsk City as of October 22, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations near Bakhmut and in western Zaporizhia Oblast on October 22. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian troops continue offensive actions south of Bakhmut and in the Melitopol (western Zaporizhia Oblast) directions.[10] Ukrainian Tavriisk Group of Forces Spokesperson Colonel Oleksandr Shtupun noted that Ukrainian forces maintained offensive pressure in western Zaporizhia Oblast despite active Russian hostilities in the Avdiivka direction.[11]

Russian forces conducted a series of missile and drone strikes against Ukraine on October 22. Ukrainian military officials reported that Russian forces launched eight S-300 missiles, a Kh-59 missile, three Shahed-131/136 drones, and two drones of an unspecified type at targets in Ukraine and that Ukrainian air defenses destroyed the three Shahed drones and the Kh-59 missile.[12] Ukrainian officials reported that Russian forces struck the “Nova Poshta” terminal near Kharkiv City as well as Kostyantynivka, Donetsk Oblast with S-300 missiles.[13] Ukrainian Air Force Spokesperson Colonel Yuriy Ihnat specified that reports about drones of an unspecified type refer to makeshift Russian drones constructed from simple materials, which include engines acquired from AliExpress.[14]

The nationalist pro-war Russian information space is reckoning with the possibility of a major demographic decline by weaponizing anti-migrant rhetoric. The Russian Federal State Statistics Service (Rosstat) published a new demographic forecast for the Russian Federation on October 20 that predicts that Russia's population will decrease to 138.77 million people by January 1, 2046.[15] Rosstat estimated that the rate of natural population decline will exceed 600,000 people per year between 2024-2032 but will slow to 400,000 people per year from 2032-2046.[16] Several Russian commentators seized on these statistics and warned that they portend “demographic catastrophe” if restorative measures are not undertaken immediately.[17] One Russian source blamed Russia’s declining population on migrants and called for ethnic Russians to immediately increase the national birthrate, as well as to automate many production systems to replace migrant labor.[18] ISW has previously reported on instances of vocal Russian nationalist enclaves within the pro-war information space amplifying anti-migrant rhetoric to explain away and try to remedy reports of Russian demographic transitions.[19] Such rhetoric is particularly noteworthy as the Russian force generation apparatus is increasingly exploiting migrant and other ethnic minority communities as a mobilization resource, which ISW outlines in the force generation section of today’s update.[20]

A prominent Russian milblogger and frontline commander criticized Russian top-down censorship campaigns. Russian “Vostok” Battalion Commander Alexander Khodakovsky claimed on October 22 that many Russians are dissatisfied with official reports and summaries about the war in Ukraine and urged Russian officials to report honestly about the frontline to garner wider public support.[21] Khodakovsky, who has consistently complained about problems affecting Russian combat operations, claimed that all of his statements are “inspected with increased scrutiny” given his official status.[22] Khodakovsky argued that one can “install filters on the central media” but cannot make people think a certain way.[23] Khodakovsky claimed that unspecified actors who are “embarrassed” by his statements are pushing Rosgvardia to take action against him for his criticisms.[24] Khodakovsky was appointed the deputy head of the Main Directorate of Rosgvardia in occupied Donetsk Oblast in February 2023 and commands Rosgvardia’s special rapid response and riot police (OMON and SOBR) in occupied Donetsk Oblast.[25] Khodakovsky’s claim, if true, indicates that some actors may be trying to leverage Rosgvardia’s likely concern about potential repercussions for Khodakovsky’s increasingly vocal criticisms, which have become more conspicuous as other Russian milbloggers engage in greater self-censorship over fears of running afoul of Russian authorities.[26]

Deceased Wagner Group financier Yevgeny Prigozhin's ideological and rhetorical campaign against the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) has largely become decoupled from the issue of the Wagner Group and appears to have outlived Prigozhin

himself. Russian lawyer Kirill Kachur, whom the Russian Investigative Committee charged in absentia for embezzlement and bribery in 2022, claimed on October 22 that Prigozhin filed applications to the Russian Investigative Committee to initiate a criminal case against Russian Defense Minister Army General Sergei Shoigu and Chief of the General Staff Army General Valery Gerasimov for the “genocide of the Russian people, the murder to tens of thousands of Russian citizens, and the transfer of Russian territories to the enemy” before Wagner’s June 24 armed rebellion.[27] Kachur appealed to Investigative Committee Head Alexander Bastrykin to publicly address what has happened to these applications since Prigozhin’s death and concluded that Russians who support Prigozhin and his message should coalesce around the ideological principles Prigozhin espoused and push for the restoration of justice in Russian society.[28] Kachur’s invocation of Prigozhin’s ideological opposition to the Russian MoD suggests that the intense dislike for and disapproval of the MoD has outlived Prigozhin, even as the Wagner Group has disbanded as a centralized entity. A select camp within the Russian information space that aligns itself with Prigozhin’s hyper-nationalist pro-war, yet anti-MoD ideology will likely continue to launch informational critiques on the MoD and the Russian military command as the war continues.

Key Takeaways:

- **Russian forces are funneling additional forces to the Avdiivka front despite ongoing challenges with frontal mechanized assaults and the failure of a renewed push on October 19-20.**
- **Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations near Bakhmut and in western Zaporizhia Oblast on October 22.**
- **Russian forces conducted a series of missile and drone strikes against Ukraine on October 22.**
- **The nationalist pro-war Russian information space is reckoning with the possibility of a major demographic decline by weaponizing anti-migrant rhetoric.**
- **A prominent Russian milblogger and frontline commander criticized Russian top-down censorship campaigns.**
- **Deceased Wagner Group financier Yevgeny Prigozhin's ideological and rhetorical campaign against the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) has largely become decoupled from the issue of the Wagner Group and appears to have outlived Prigozhin himself.**
- **Russian forces conducted offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line, near Bakhmut, along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line, in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area, and in western Zaporizhia Oblast and advanced in some areas on October 22.**
- **Russian authorities are intensifying mobilization efforts targeting Central Asian migrant communities.**
- **Russian occupation authorities continue to use cultural and education programs to forcibly Russify Ukrainian children.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of October 22, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



We do not report in detail on Russian war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We will continue to evaluate and report on the effects of these criminal activities on the Ukrainian military and the Ukrainian population and specifically on combat in Ukrainian urban areas. We utterly condemn these Russian violations of the laws of armed conflict, Geneva Conventions, and humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

- Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine (comprised of two subordinate main efforts)
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and encircle northern Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis
- Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts
- Activities in Russian-occupied areas
- Russian Information Operations and Narratives

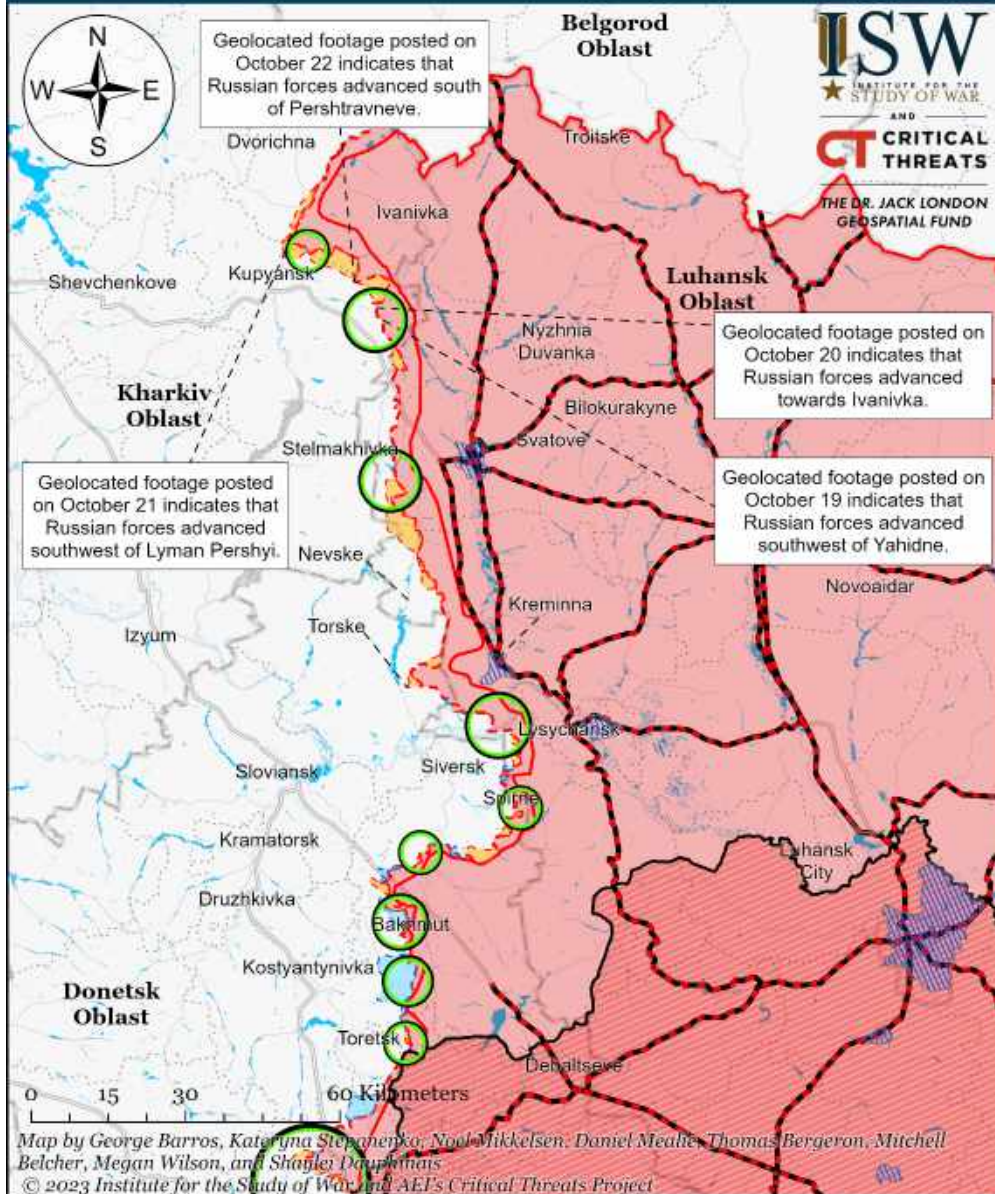
Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Luhansk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and northern Donetsk Oblast)

Russian forces conducted offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kremlinna line and made confirmed advances. Geolocated footage posted on October 22 indicates that Russian forces advanced southwest of Pershotravneve (21km northeast of Kupyansk), southwest of Yahidne (22km southeast of Kupyansk), and east of Terny (17km west of Kremlinna).[29] A Russian news aggregator claimed on October 21 that Russian forces achieved unspecified success in the Serebryanske forest area (10km southwest of Kremlinna).[30] The Ukrainian General Staff reported on October 22 that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Synkivka (8km northeast of Kupyansk), Ivanivka (20km southeast of Kupyansk), Nadiya (15km west of Svatove), Bilohorivka (12km south of Kremlinna), the Serebryanske forest area (10km southwest of Kremlinna), and Spirne (25km south of Kremlinna).[31] A Russian milblogger claimed that the Russian MoD recently implied that Russian forces have gone on the defensive in the Kupyansk direction and near Torske (15km west of Kremlinna), although ISW has not observed evidence of this claim.[32] Ukrainian military observer Konstantyn Mashovets reported that Russian forces temporarily halted offensive operations near Ivanivka in order to respond to reported Ukrainian advances towards Orlyanka (22km east of Kupyansk).[33] Mashovets reported that elements of the Russian 2nd Motorized Rifle Division (1st Tank Army, Western Military District) have reinforced Russian forces in the Kupyansk direction, and a Russian milblogger also claimed that elements of the Russian 1st Tank Army are repelling Ukrainian counterattacks in this direction.[34] Ukrainian Ground Forces Command Spokesperson Lieutenant Colonel Volodymyr Fityo stated that Russian forces are transferring reserves consisting mostly of Storm-Z convict recruits to the Kupyansk and Lyman directions.[35]

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kremlinna line but did not make any claimed or confirmed advances. The Russian MoD claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Synkivka, Ivanivka, Nadiya, Torske, the Serebryanske forest area, and Dibrova (7km southwest of Kremlinna).[36] A Russian news aggregator claimed on October 21 that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Synkivka and Makiivka (22km northwest of Kremlinna).[37]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of October 22, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Russian Ground Lines of Communication
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory

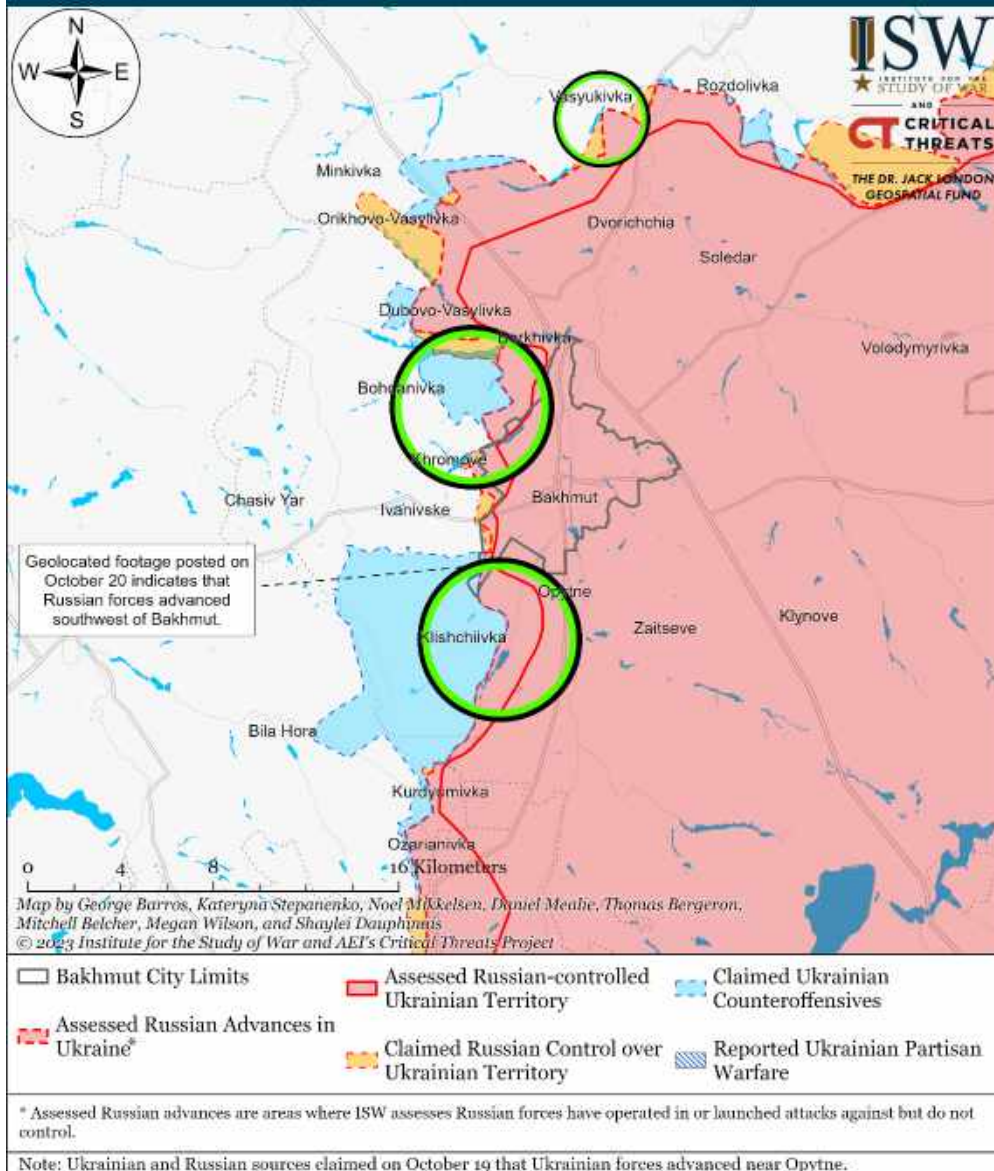
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Donetsk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)

Ukrainian forces continued ground attacks near Bakhmut on October 22 and reportedly advanced. Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets stated that Ukrainian forces are intensifying their operations along the Bakhmut-Horlivka railway line and claimed that Ukrainian forces crossed the railway line north of Zelonopillya (12km southwest of Bakhmut).[38] The Russian MoD claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Bohdanivka (5km northwest of Bakhmut) and Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut).[39] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces continued attempts to cross the railway along the Klishchiivka-Andriivka (7-10km southwest of Bakhmut) line on October 21 and 22.[40]

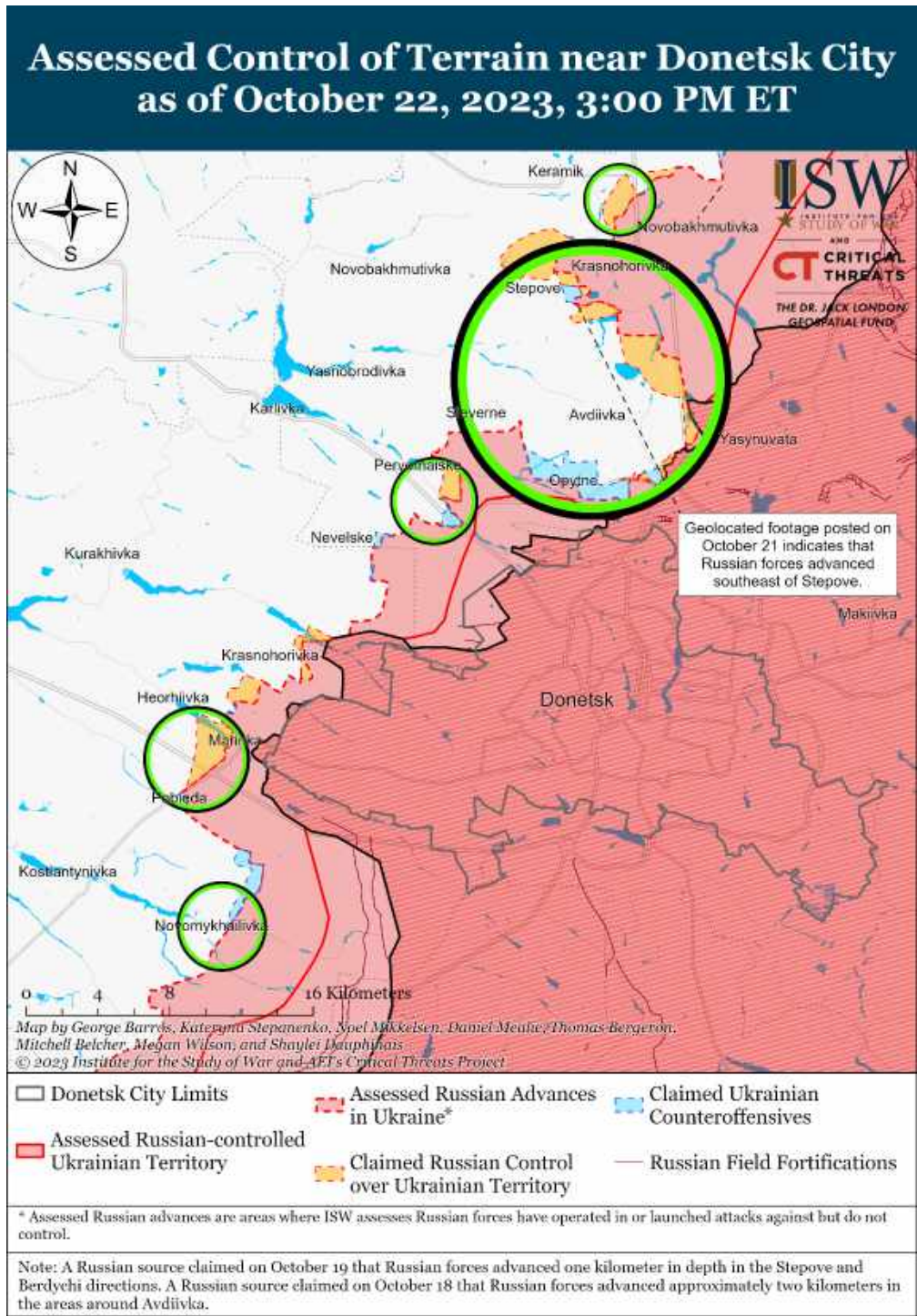
Russian forces continued ground attacks near Bakhmut on October 22 but did not make any claimed or confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks near Vasyukivka (16km north of Bakhmut), Bohdanivka, Khromove (immediately west of Bakhmut), Andriivka, and Druzhba (18km southwest of Bakhmut).[41] Ukrainian Ground Forces Command Spokesperson Lieutenant Colonel Volodymyr Fityo stated that Russian forces also attacked near Klishchiivka.[42] Mashovets stated that Russian forces, particularly elements of the 200th Separate Motorized Rifle Brigade (14th Army Corps, Northern Fleet) and the 331st Guards Airborne (VDV) Regiment (98th VDV Division), intensified activity in the direction of Bohdanivka, Yahidne (directly north of Bakhmut), and Khromove over the last few days.[43] Mashovets added that elements of the Russian 4th Motorized Rifle Brigade (Luhansk People’s Republic [LNR] 2nd Army Corps) and 83rd Guards Air Assault (VDV) Brigade are counterattacking near Klishchiivka and Zaitseve (6km southeast of Bakhmut).[44] The Russian MoD published footage on October 22 claiming to show elements of the Russian 98th VDV Division operating on the northwestern outskirts of Bakhmut.[45]

Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of October 22, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



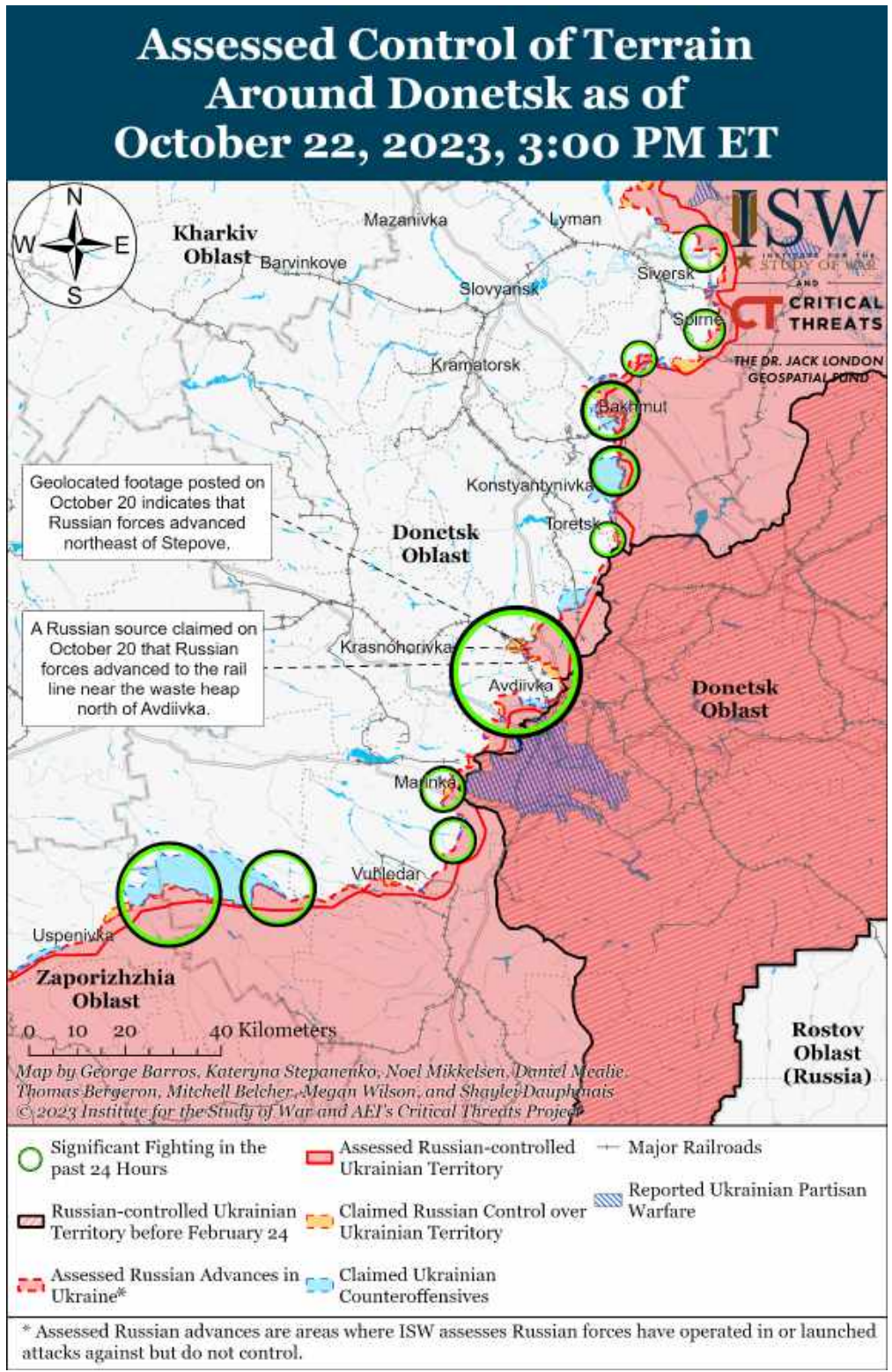
Russian forces continued ground attacks near Avdiivka on October 22 and made a confirmed marginal advance south of Avdiivka. Geolocated footage published on October 21 indicates that Russian forces marginally advanced southeast of Pervomaiske (11km southwest of Avdiivka).[46] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks near Keramik (10km northwest of Avdiivka), Stepove (3km northwest of Avdiivka), Avdiivka, Tonenke (5km west of Avdiivka), Opytne (3km southwest of Avdiivka), Nevelske, and Pervomaiske.[47] A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces also attacked near Novokalynove (7km north of Avdiivka) and advanced near Stepove.[48] Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets stated that elements of the 9th Motorized Rifle Brigade and 110th Motorized Rifle Brigade (both units of the Donetsk People's Republic [DNR] 1st Army Corps) unsuccessfully attacked in the Vodyane-Tonenke

(5-7km southwest of Avdiivka), Vodyane-Netaylove (5-14km southwest of Avdiivka), and Pisky-Pervomaiske (8-11km southwest of Avdiivka) directions.[49]



Russian forces continued ground attacks southwest of Donetsk City on October 22 but did not make any claimed or confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled over 20 Russian attacks near Marinka, Krasnohorivka, and Pobieda (all on the southwestern outskirts of Donetsk City), Nevelske (directly west of Donetsk City), and Novomykhailivka (25km

southwest of Donetsk City).[50] A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Marinka and Novomykhailivka.[51]



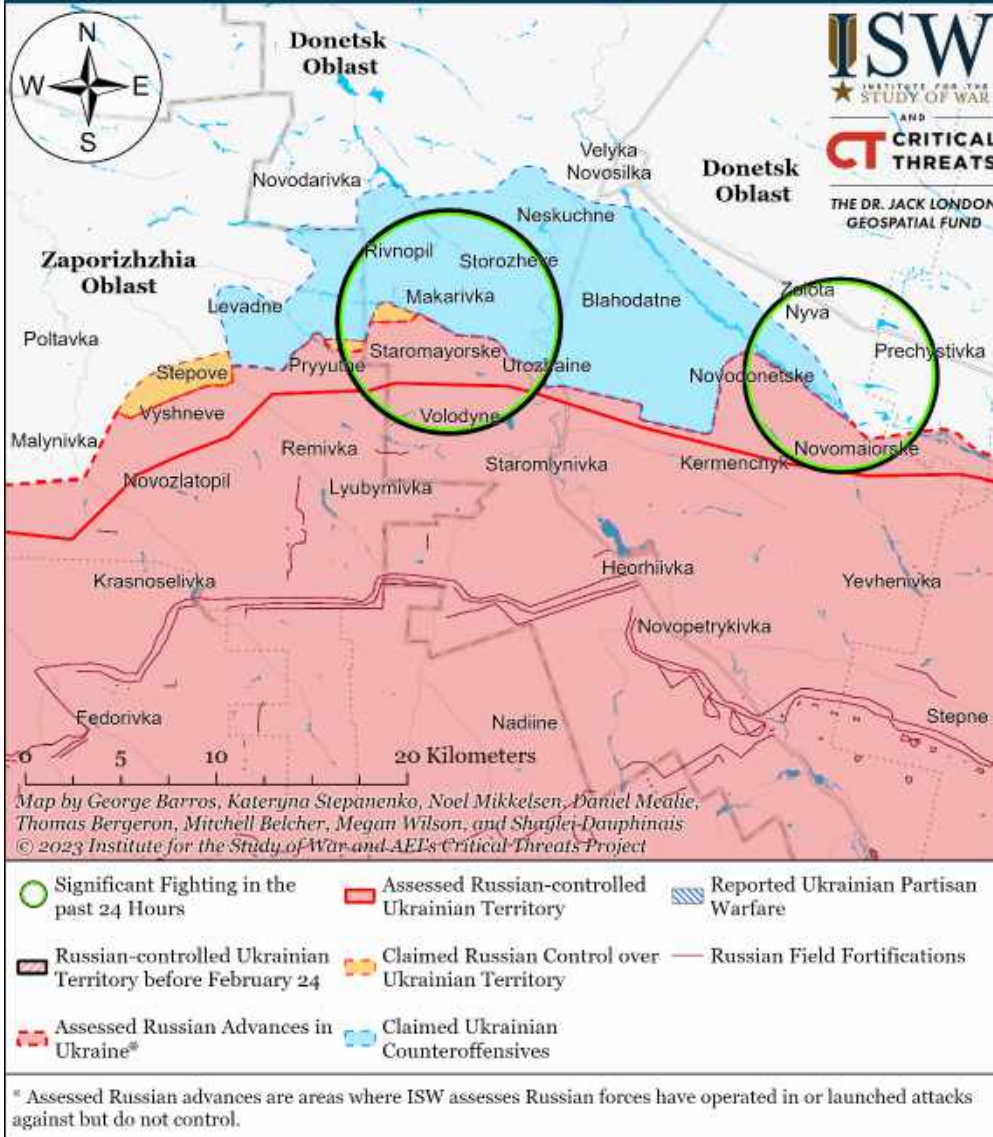
Ukrainian forces did not conduct any claimed or confirmed ground attacks southwest of Donetsk City on October 22.

Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions and secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes)

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted limited ground attacks along the administrative border between Donetsk and Zaporizhia oblasts on October 22 and advanced. A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces made marginal advances near Novodonetske (12km southeast of Velyka Novosilka).[52] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces continued attempts to occupy heights between Pryyutne (14km southwest of Velyka Novosilka) and Staromayorske (9km south of Velyka Novosilka) but did not specify an outcome.[53]

Russian forces conducted ground attacks in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on October 22 but did not make any confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks near Prechystivka (17km southeast of Velyka Novosilka), Zolota Nyva (11km southeast of Velyka Novosilka), Staromayorske, and Pryyutne.[54] Russian sources claimed on October 21 and 22 that Russian forces advanced near Pryyutne.[55] A Russian milblogger claimed on October 22 that Russian forces also counterattacked near Poltavka (28km southwest of Velyka Novosilka) and characterized the area as a new direction for Russian offensive actions.[56]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around the Vremivka Salient as of October 22, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

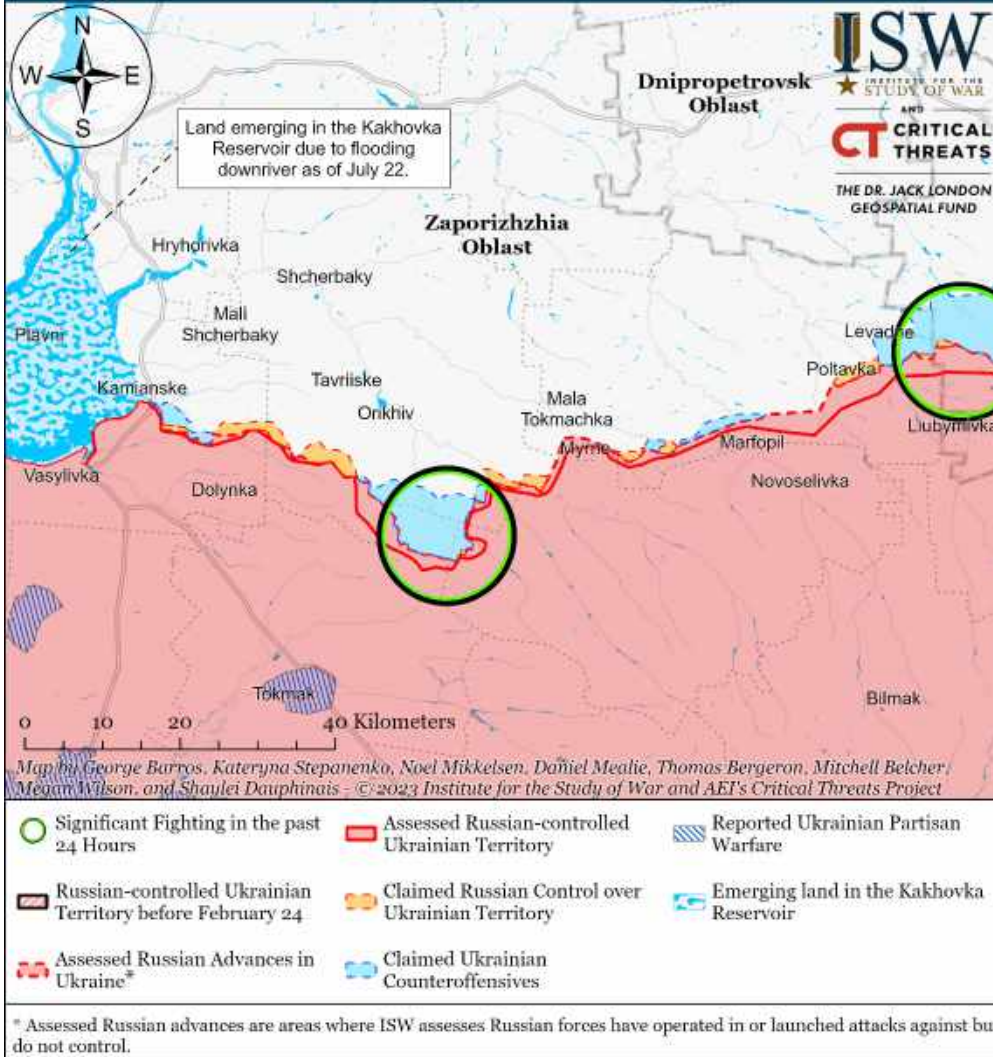


Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast on October 22 but did not make any confirmed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Melitopol (western Zaporizhzhia Oblast) direction.[57] Russian sources, including the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD), claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian assaults near Robotyne, Novoprokopivka (3km south of Robotyne), and Verbove (9km west of Robotyne).[58] A Russian milblogger claimed that small Ukrainian groups are conducting reconnaissance-in-force operations near Verbove.[59]

Russian forces counterattacked in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast on October 22 but did not make any confirmed or claimed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian assaults near Robotyne and Verbove.[60] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian Airborne (VDV) elements conducted successful counterattacks in an unspecified location in the Robotyne area.[61] A Russian milblogger claimed that elements of the 83rd Guards VDV Brigade is operating along the Myrne-Nesteryanka line (up to 12km northwest of Robotyne).[62]



Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhzhia as of October 22, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

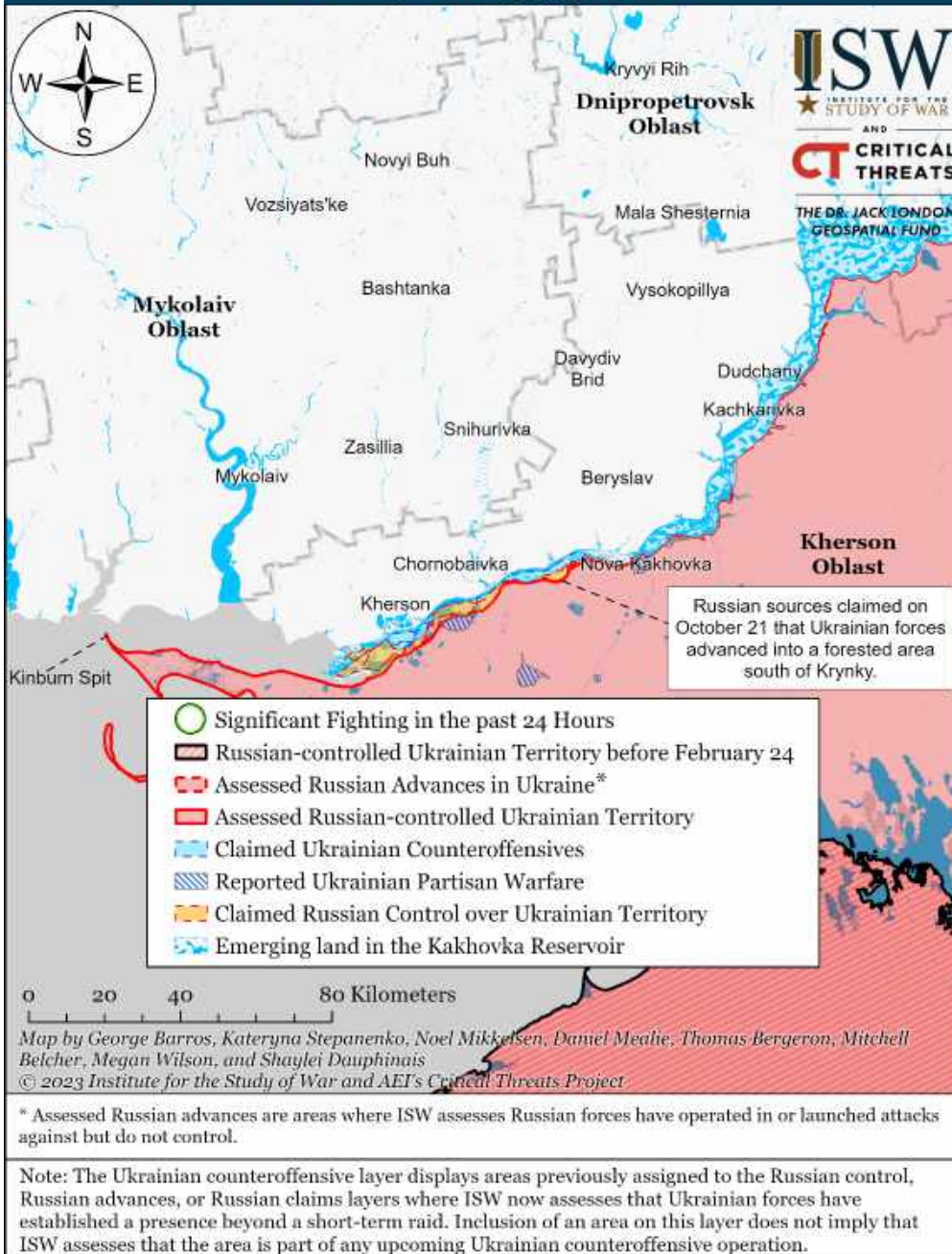


Ukrainian forces reportedly maintain positions on the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast as of October 22. Russian sources continue to claim that Ukrainian forces are operating in Krynyky (30km northeast of Kherson City and 2km from the Dnipro River) and that fighting is ongoing near the settlement.[63] One Russian milblogger claimed that fighting is ongoing near Pishchanivka (13km southeast of Kherson City and 3km from the Dnipro River), although no other Russian source has made claims about fighting near Pishchanivka since October 19.[64] Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets stated that Ukrainian forces expanded their presence on the east bank and control positions from the Dnipro shoreline to the upper Konka River, although available visual evidence so far indicates that Ukrainian forces have a smaller presence on the east bank.[65] A Russian source claimed that Ukrainian forces advanced up to 5km between Oleshky (7km south of Kherson City and 4km from the Dnipro River) and Kozachi Laheri (22km east of Kherson City and 3km from the Dnipro River) after launching a larger-than-usual ground activity on the east bank on

the night of October 17 to 18 but that Russian forces later pushed Ukrainian forces out of these positions.[66] The Russian MoD claimed on October 22 that Russian forces prevented Ukrainian sabotage and reconnaissance groups from crossing the Dnipro River near Prydniprovsk (8km east of Kherson City), Tyahinka (30km east of Kherson City), and Krynky.[67] A Russian milblogger claimed that elements of the Russian 70th Motorized Rifle Division (reportedly of the 18th Combined Arms Army), 810th Separate Naval Infantry Brigade (Black Sea Fleet), 177th Separate Naval Infantry Regiment (Caspian Flotilla), 126th Separate Coast Guard Brigade (22nd Army Corps, Black Sea Fleet), 8th Artillery Regiment (22nd Army Corps, Black Sea Fleet), and 127th Separate Reconnaissance Brigade (22nd Army Corps, Black Sea Fleet) are currently defending on the east bank.[68]

Russian forces continue to conduct a high number of airstrikes against targets on the west (right) bank of Kherson Oblast as of October 22. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian aviation conducted airstrikes near Olhivka, Lviv, Tyahinka, Tokarivka, Ponyativka, and Barvinok in Kherson Oblast.[69] Kherson Oblast Military Administration head Oleksandr Prokudin reported that Russian aviation launched 12 glide bombs against settlements on the west bank on October 22.[70] Ukrainian Southern Operational Command Spokesperson Captain First Rank Nataliya Humenyuk stated that Russian forces launched 36 glide bombs over the past day.[71]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of October 22, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces launched an unspecified number of S-200 missiles at occupied Sevastopol on October 22.[72] Other Russian sources did not comment on the reported launches, but Russian *Radio Liberty's* Tatar-Bashkir service *Idel Realii* reported that Russian authorities temporarily closed the Kerch Strait Bridge to traffic.[73] Occupied Sevastopol

governor Mikhail Razvozhayev amplified air alert sirens for Sevastopol but did not comment on what activity the sirens were connected to.[74]

Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts (Russian objective: Expand combat power without conducting general mobilization)

Russian authorities are intensifying mobilization efforts targeting Central Asian migrant communities. Russian opposition outlets reported on October 22 that Russian riot police conducted a raid on a mosque in Kotelniki, Moscow Oblast on October 20, detained several dozen worshippers, took them on buses to military registration and enlistment offices, and forced them to sign military service contracts.[75] Russian singer and TV show finalist Mamut Useinov stated that he was among the detainees and reported that Russian authorities threatened him and other detainees with imprisonment if they did not sign one-year military service contracts.[76] Useinov stated that authorities told the detainees that they would fight in Ukraine but did not specify a timeline for their deployment.[77] A Russian insider source relatedly claimed on October 22 that the Russian command sent an order to all departments of the Main Directorate of the Investigative Committee to “identify naturalized citizens of the Russian Federation who arrived from Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries and are evading military service” and demanded that the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) provide lists of the names and addresses of naturalized citizens from CIS states.[78] The insider source noted that the Investigative Committee and police are raiding hostels, apartments, catering units, and mosques using these lists and taking detainees straight to military registration offices.[79] Several Russian sources praised the raid, underlining intense xenophobic sentiment towards Central Asian migrants, and claimed that naturalized migrants have a duty to serve Russia.[80] Investigative Committee Head Alexander Bastrykin has notably pushed for the targeted mobilization of migrants from Central Asia and the Caucasus, claiming that migrants have a “constitutional responsibility to protect the country that received them.”[81]

Activities in Russian-occupied areas (Russian objective: Consolidate administrative control of annexed areas; forcibly integrate Ukrainian citizens into Russian sociocultural, economic, military, and governance systems)

Russian occupation authorities continue to use cultural and education programs to forcibly Russify Ukrainian children. Zaporizhia occupation head Yevgeny Balitsky stated on October 22 that 200 children from occupied Zaporizhia Oblast returned from a trip to Moscow and St. Petersburg with the “Cultural Map 4+85” program.[82] Balitsky claimed that over 2,500 children from occupied Zaporizhia Oblast will have participated in such cultural-educational programming by the end of 2023.[83] The “Cultural Map 4+85” program began in August of 2023 and operates under the auspices of the Russian Ministry of Culture, which claimed that up to 10,000 children from occupied Zaporizhia, Kherson, Donetsk, and Luhansk oblasts will take part in the program and visit Russian cultural sites.[84] Such programs appear to target school-aged children and teenagers and likely intend to Russify them while actively distancing them from their Ukrainian identities.

Russian Information Operations and Narratives

Nothing significant to report.

Significant activity in Belarus (Russian efforts to increase its military presence in

Belarus and further integrate Belarus into Russian-favorable frameworks and Wagner Group activity in Belarus)

Satellite imagery indicates that Russian forces are expanding facilities in Belarus to store previously reported nuclear weapon deployments to Belarus. The *Wall Street Journal* published satellite imagery on October 18 showing the construction of a hangar near Asipovichy meant to house Iskander cruise missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads.[85] The *Wall Street Journal* also reported that satellite imagery from the area shows the construction of facilities typical for Russian nuclear weapons warehouses.[86] ISW has repeatedly assessed and continues to assess that the forward deployment of these nuclear weapons will not critically change the Russian threat to NATO, and any Russian use of nuclear weapons in Ukraine remains extremely unlikely.[87]

Note: ISW does not receive any classified material from any source, uses only publicly available information, and draws extensively on Russian, Ukrainian, and Western reporting and social media as well as commercially available satellite imagery and other geospatial data as the basis for these reports. References to all sources used are provided in the endnotes of each update.

POWERED BY:



BABELSTREET

[1] <https://t.me/rybar/53504> ; https://t.me/negumanitarnaya_pomosch_Z/11544 ; https://t.me/boris_rozhin/101670 ; https://t.me/dva_majors/27799

[2] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15945> ; https://t.me/negumanitarnaya_pomosch_Z/11544 ; <https://t.me/rybar/53504>

[3] https://t.me/boris_rozhin/101616 ; https://t.me/vozhak_Z/463

[4] <https://x.com/klinger66/status/1715915241614086423?s=20>; <https://x.com/PuenteUribarri/status/1715712940874125334?s=20>

[5] <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4166>

[6] <https://t.me/rybar/53502>

[7] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar101423> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar101623>

[8] https://armyinform.com_dot_ua/2023/10/22/na-tavrijskomu-napryamku-protyvnyk-udvichi-posylyv-vogon-artyleryi-oleksandr-shtupun/

[9] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1335>

[10] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2JnjKWgiLnf4Kr8Noptpb3YDnFrcxVT88iUCKa5gKie6sWyPiuCwHBQeeXk5xQl>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfb>

idoGDLBsRViNKKtrvdJdtGf1ahFi8vBDCfjYWdnxMX5mQXkk3j4PbVYeA4PvZR7jJHul; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02LQm2fwuCGgBb7JtQa8ad9pGnoeq2Uxvk1J982SQCkpz3g4eyVbHrEcEEroUufcEvl>

[11] <https://armyinform.com.ua/2023/10/22/na-melitopolskomu-napryamku-my-prodovzhuyemo-vedennya-nastupalnoyi-operacziyi-oleksandr-shtupun/>

[12] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02JnjKWgiLnf4Kr8Noptbc3YDnFrcxVT88iUCKa5gKie6sWyPiuCwHBQeeXkbbk5xQl> ; <https://www.facebook.com/kpszsu/posts/pfbid0R8stysBfuwg5EbnYGhrF2VVt6E3kyWgd5HgwFjZ5e5faFBVocCzW1SQqaDLwRtHF1>

[13] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0GDLBsRViNKKtrvdJdtGf1ahFi8vBDCfjYWdnxMX5mQXkk3j4PbVYeA4PvZR7jJHul>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02LQm2fwuCGgBb7JtQa8ad9pGnoeq2Uxvk1J982SQCkpz3g4eyVbHrEcEEroUufcEvl> ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nOCottoPWmk> ; <https://suspilne.media/599499-poterminalu-novoi-posti-pid-harkovom-rf-bila-z-teritorii-bilgorodskoi-oblasti-raketami-s-300-prokuratura/> ; <https://suspilne.media/599595-vnoci-rosiani-zavdali-raketnogo-udaru-pokostantinivci/> ; https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=pfbid0tiv4T9ojTJuQ2d18P95Gsa2Lf8rqBR16baaYH4mraAyqFBR1XLSeWjMamkAP5KXyl&id=100081113925161

[14] <https://armyinform.com.ua/2023/10/22/yurij-ignat-rozpoviv-pro-te-shho-kryyetsya-zaponyattiam-raket-i-bpla-nevstanovlenogo-typu/>

[15] <https://www.interfax.ru/russia/926945>; <https://www.rbc.ru/economics/20/10/2023/6532903a9a7947d2efaf4b74>; <https://www.vedomosti.ru/society/news/2023/10/20/1001774-rosstat-sprognoziroval-sokraschenie-naseleniya>

[16] <https://www.interfax.ru/russia/926945>

[17] <https://t.me/suverenka/5152> ; <https://t.me/NeoficialniyBeZsonoV/30219>

[18] <https://t.me/suverenka/5152>

[19] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar041523>

[20] <https://www.svoboda.org/a/uchastnik-teleshou-soobschil-ob-oblave-na-prizyvnikov-navyhode-iz-mecheti/32648899.html>; <https://t.me/genshtab24/37430> ; <https://t.me/sotaproject/68221>;

[21] https://t.me/aleksandr_skif/2970

[22] https://t.me/aleksandr_skif/2970

[23] https://t.me/aleksandr_skif/2970 ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar100223> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-1-2023> ; <https://understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-august-29-2023> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign>

assessment-august-14-2023 ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounders/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-august-13-2023> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar101523>

[24] https://t.me/aleksandr_skif/2970

[25] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounders/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-march-30-2023>

[26] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounders/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-16-2023> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounders/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-15-2023> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounders/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-12-2023>

[27] https://t.me/kirill_kachur/1226; https://t.me/kirill_kachur/1221

[28] https://t.me/kirill_kachur/1226

[29] https://t.me/WarArchive_ua/6466 ; https://t.me/WarArchive_ua/6451; https://x.com/auditor_ua/status/1716089226918351039?s=20 ; https://t.me/kraken_kha/452 ; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Uycq6ivHCo ; https://t.me/s/kiber_boroshno

[30] <https://t.me/readovkanews/68195>

[31] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02JnjKWgiLnf4Kr8Noptbc3YDnFrcxVT88iUCKa5gKie6sWyPiuCwHBQeeXkbbk5xQl> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0GDLBsRViNKKtrvdJdtGf1ahFi8vBDCfjYWdnxMX5mQXkk3j4PbVYeA4PvZR7jJHul> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02LQm2fwuCGgBb7JtQa8ad9pGnoeq2Uxvk1J982SQCkpz3g4eyVbHrEcEEroUufcEvl>

[32] https://t.me/dva_majors/27799

[33] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1335>

[34] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1335> ; https://t.me/boris_rozhin/101627

[35] <https://armyinform.com.ua/2023/10/22/shansiv-dlya-zdijsnennya-proryvu-nashoyi-liniyi-oborony-na-shodi-krayiny-u-protyvnyka-nemaye-volodymyr-fito/>

[36] https://t.me/mod_russia/31724 ; https://t.me/mod_russia/31720

[37] <https://t.me/readovkanews/68195>

[38] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1336>

[39] https://t.me/mod_russia/31724

[40] https://t.me/dva_majors/27799 ; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4164>

[41] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoGDLBsRViNKKtrvdJdtGf1ahFi8vBDCfjYWdnxMX5mQXkk3j4PbVYeA4PvZR7jJHul>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2LQm2fwuCGgBb7JtQa8ad9pGnoeq2Uxvk1J982SQckpz3g4eyVbHrEcEEroUufcEvl>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2JnjKWgiLnf4Kr8Noptpb3YDnFrcxVT88iUCKa5gKie6sWyPiuCwHBQeeXkbbk5xQl>

[42] <https://armyinform.com.ua/2023/10/22/shansiv-dlya-zdijsnennya-proryvu-nashoyi-liniyi-oborony-na-shodi-krayiny-u-protyvnyka-nemaye-volodymyr-fito/>

[43] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1336>

[44] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1336>

[45] https://t.me/mod_russia/31717

[46] <https://x.com/klinger66/status/1715915241614086423?s=20>; <https://x.com/PuenteUribarri/status/1715712940874125334?s=20>

[47] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2JnjKWgiLnf4Kr8Noptpb3YDnFrcxVT88iUCKa5gKie6sWyPiuCwHBQeeXkbbk5xQl>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoGDLBsRViNKKtrvdJdtGf1ahFi8vBDCfjYWdnxMX5mQXkk3j4PbVYeA4PvZR7jJHul>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2LQm2fwuCGgBb7JtQa8ad9pGnoeq2Uxvk1J982SQckpz3g4eyVbHrEcEEroUufcEvl>

[48] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15945>

[49] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1335>

[50] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoGDLBsRViNKKtrvdJdtGf1ahFi8vBDCfjYWdnxMX5mQXkk3j4PbVYeA4PvZR7jJHul>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2LQm2fwuCGgBb7JtQa8ad9pGnoeq2Uxvk1J982SQckpz3g4eyVbHrEcEEroUufcEvl>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2JnjKWgiLnf4Kr8Noptpb3YDnFrcxVT88iUCKa5gKie6sWyPiuCwHBQeeXkbbk5xQl>

[51] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15945>

[52] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15945>

[53] <https://t.me/rybar/53489>

[54] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoGDLBsRViNKKtrvdJdtGf1ahFi8vBDCfjYWdnxMX5mQXkk3j4PbVYeA4PvZR7jJHul>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2LQm2fwuCGgBb7JtQa8ad9pGnoeq2Uxvk1J982SQckpz3g4eyVbHrEcEEroUufcEvl>

[55] <https://t.me/readovkanews/68195>; <https://t.me/rybar/53489>

[56] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15945>

[57] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoGDLBsRViNKKtrvdJdtGf1ahFi8vBDCfjYWdnxMX5mQXkk3j4PbVYeA4PvZR7jJHul>;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2LQm2fwuCGgBb7JtQa8ad9pGnoeq2Uxvk1J982SQckpz3g4eyVbHrEcEEroUufcEvl>

[58] https://t.me/mod_russia/31725 ; https://t.me/rusich_army/11457 ; https://t.me/dva_majors/27799 ; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4170> ; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4182>

[59] <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4163>

[60] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2JnjKWgiLnf4Kr8Noptpb3YDnFrcxVT88iUCKa5gKie6sWyPiuCwHBQeeXkbbk5xQl>

[61] https://t.me/dva_majors/27799

[62] <https://t.me/batalyon15/3162>

[63] <https://t.me/rybar/53489> ; https://t.me/dva_majors/27799 ; <https://t.me/wargonzo/15945> ; <https://t.me/readovkanews/68195>

[64] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15945> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar101923>

[65] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1336>

[66] <https://t.me/NeoficialniyBeZsonoV/30236>

[67] https://t.me/mod_russia/31725

[68] <https://t.me/MedvedevVesti/15611>

[69] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2JnjKWgiLnf4Kr8Noptpb3YDnFrcxVT88iUCKa5gKie6sWyPiuCwHBQeeXkbbk5xQl>

[70] <https://t.me/olexandrprokudin/1715>

[71] https://armyinform.com_dot_ua/2023/10/22/mynuloyi-doby-okupanty-vypustyly-36-kerovanyh-aviabomb-po-terytoriyi-hersonshhyny/

[72] <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4188>

[73] <https://t.me/idelrealii/31451>

[74] <https://t.me/razvozhaev/4283> ; <https://t.me/razvozhaev/4285>

[75] https://www.svoboda_dot_org/a/uchastnik-teleshou-soobschil-ob-oblave-na-prizyvnikov-na-vyhode-iz-mecheti/32648899.html; <https://t.me/genshtab24/37430> ; <https://t.me/sotaproject/68221>;

[76] https://t.me/Mamut_singer/76;
. <https://t.me/mobilizationnews/16020> ; <https://t.me/idelrealii/31454> ; <https://t.me/astrapress/40903>

[77] https://t.me/Mamut_singer/76

[78] <https://t.me/mobilizationnews/16025> ; <https://t.me/vchkogpu/43051> ; <https://t.me/thekremlinru/352>; <https://t.me/rusbrief/167042>

[79] <https://t.me/vchkogpu/43051>

[80] <https://t.me/readovkanews/68205>; <https://t.me/rusbrief/167000>

[81] <https://rus.azattyk.org/a/32225030.html>; <https://understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-april-12-2023>;
<https://understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-may-5-2023>

[82] <https://t.me/BalitskyEV/1921>

[83] <https://t.me/BalitskyEV/1921>

[84] <https://portal-kultura dot ru/articles/news/352540-startovala-programma-kulturnaya-karta-4-85-dlya-detey-iz-novykh-regionov/>

[85] <https://www.wsj.com/video/satellite-images-show-russia-increasing-nuclear-capability-in-belarus/331FB832-177F-474C-995D-2BFB12C3D23B.html>

[86] <https://www.wsj.com/video/satellite-images-show-russia-increasing-nuclear-capability-in-belarus/331FB832-177F-474C-995D-2BFB12C3D23B.html>

[87] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-november-6> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-5-2023> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-9-2023>

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, October 21, 2023

Angelica Evans, Riley Bailey, Grace Mappes, Karolina Hird, and Mason Clark

October 21, 2023, 4:45pm ET

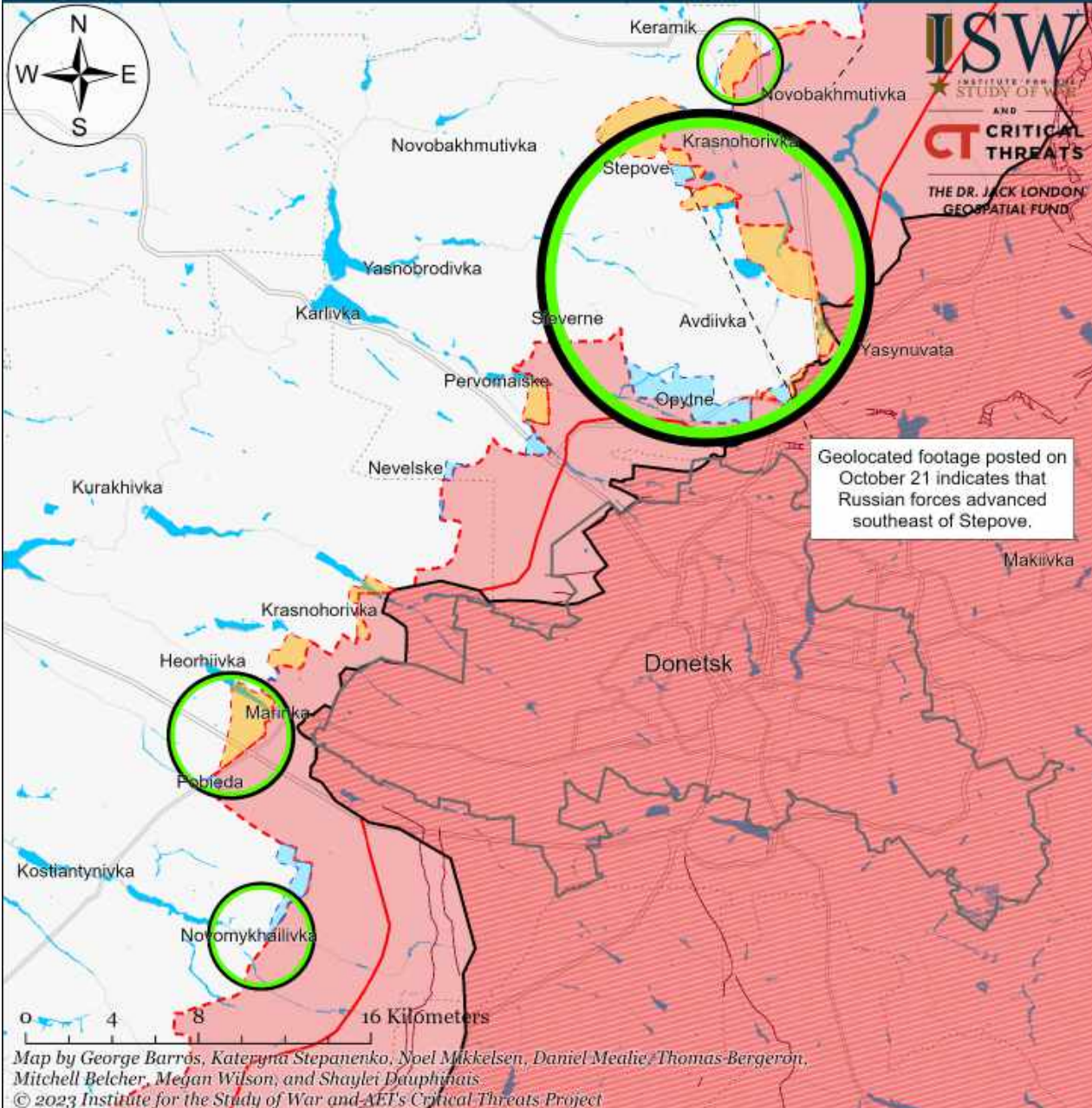
Click [here](#) to see ISW's interactive map of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

Click [here](#) to access ISW's archive of interactive time-lapse maps of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. These maps complement the static control-of-terrain map that ISW produces daily by showing a dynamic frontline. ISW will update this time-lapse map archive monthly.

Note: The data cut-off for this product was 12:30pm ET on October 21. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the October 22 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Ukrainian forces have likely repelled another intensified Russian offensive effort towards Avdiivka in the past several days and inflicted further heavy personnel and equipment losses on Russian troops in the area. Ukrainian and Russian sources indicated that Russian forces mounted another offensive push on Avdiivka between October 19 and 20, and geolocated footage posted on October 21 confirms that Russian forces did make marginal gains northwest of Avdiivka in the waste heap area.[1] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces are gradually advancing north of Avdiivka near the waste heap towards Berdychi (5km northwest of Avdiivka).[2] A Ukrainian military observer noted that Russian forces are attacking towards Stepove (3km northwest of Avdiivka), towards Novokalynove (7km north of Avdiivka), and towards the waste heap from the Krasnohorivka-Vesele area.[3] However, Ukrainian military officials noted that Russian forces have somewhat decreased the pace of offensive operations near Avdiivka on October 21, and reiterated earlier Ukrainian reporting that Russian forces lost 50 tanks, 100 armored vehicles, and 900 personnel during attacks on Avdiivka on October 19.[4] Estonian Defense Forces Intelligence Center Head Ants Kiviselg notably identified the Avdiivka push as a potential avenue for a new Russian offensive alongside offensive operations along the Kharkiv-Luhansk Oblast border.[5] The fact that Russian forces continue to recommit waves of personnel and equipment to offensive efforts in the Avdiivka area suggests that Russian command will continue to prioritize this axis, despite high losses and the general low quality of Russian forces on the offensive.[6] A Ukrainian military official noted that Russia's regular infantry and tactics writ large are "consistently bad" and that Russian forces are relying instead on unmanned aerial systems (such as Lancet drones), artillery, and aviation.[7] It appears that Russian forces are continuing to use ineffective and costly tactics in offensive efforts near Avdiivka leading to high personnel and vehicle losses, and that they have continuously done so in several waves of attacks over the past week suggests that the Russian military command is prioritizing this axis, despite continued and growing losses.

Assessed Control of Terrain near Donetsk City as of October 21, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



- Donetsk City Limits
- ▭ Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- ▭ Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- ▭ Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- ▭ Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Russian Field Fortifications

* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Note: A Russian source claimed on October 19 that Russian forces advanced one kilometer in depth in the Stepove and Berdychi directions. A Russian source claimed on October 18 that Russian forces advanced approximately two kilometers in the areas around Avdiivka.

Russian forces are struggling to interdict Ukrainian efforts to supply and reinforce newly captured positions on the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast. *BBC Russia Service* reported on October 21 that Ukrainian personnel involved in ground operations on the east bank stated that they are fighting to take full control of Krynky (30km northeast of Kherson City and 2km from the Dnipro River).[8] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces maintain positions in Krynky, but disagreed about the extent of these positions.[9] A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces advanced up to almost two kilometers south of Krynky.[10] Another milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces control all of Krynky, although a different milblogger directly refuted this claim and claimed that Russian forces pushed a Ukrainian sabotage and reconnaissance group out of positions on the southern outskirts of the settlement.[11] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces are firing on Ukrainian positions near the Antonivsky roadway bridge north of Oleshky (7km south of Kherson City and 4km from the Dnipro River) and the Antonivsky railway bridge north of Poyma (10km southeast of Kherson City and 4km from the Dnipro River).[12] One milblogger claimed that there were combat engagements near Krynky and Pishchanivka (12km southeast of Kherson City and 3km from the Dnipro River), although most Russian sources claimed that Russian forces are primarily using aviation and artillery units to try to dislodge Ukrainian forces from positions on the east bank.[13] Select Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces are evacuating wounded personnel and transferring new forces and light equipment across the Dnipro River to support positions on the east bank.[14] Ukrainian forces have maintained a presence on the east bank since starting larger-than-usual ground operations on the night of October 17–18, suggesting that Ukrainian forces have been able to adequately supply and reinforce the groups conducting these operations despite increased Russian aviation activity along the Dnipro River.[15]

Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations near Bakhmut and in western Zaporizhia Oblast on October 21. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Melitopol (western Zaporizhia Oblast) direction and Bakhmut direction.[16] A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces advanced west of Novofedorivka (21km southeast of Orikhiv) and are 6 kilometers away from the settlement.[17] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces continued assaults along the Robotyne-Kopani and Robotyne-Novopropkivka lines.[18]

Russian forces may be diversifying the mix of missiles, guided bombs, and drones used in strikes on Ukrainian rear areas, likely in an attempt to find gaps in Ukrainian air defenses ahead of further strikes over the winter. The Ukrainian Southern Operational Command reported that Russian forces launched unknown air-to-surface missiles at Mykolaiv, Kherson, and Odesa oblasts; Kh-59 missiles at Kryvyi Rih, Dnipropetrovsk Oblast, and Mykolaiv and Kherson oblasts; and Iskander-K cruise missiles and Shahed drones at Kryvyi Rih on the night of October 20–21.[19] The Southern Operational Command noted that three of the unknown missiles detonated mid-air, a Kh-59 struck a residential area in Kryvyi Rih, and the Iskanders and Shaheds hit industrial facilities in Kryvyi Rih.[20] The Ukrainian Southern Operational Command reported that Russian tactical aviation simultaneously launched 30 modified KAB guided bombs against frontline areas in Kherson Oblast.[21] Ukrainian Southern Operational Command Spokesperson Captain First Rank Nataliya Humenyuk stated that Russian forces have never used this combination of weapons in similar strike series before and stated that Russian forces are shifting their main operations to the air.[22] Humenyuk's statement echoes Ukrainian Air Force Spokesperson Colonel Yuriy Ihnat's October 8 warning that Russian forces are increasing their drone strike campaign ahead of winter.[23]

Disgraced Moscow City Duma Deputy Yevgeny Stupin formally requested on October 20 that the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) investigate Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyenin for "divulging state secrets." Stupin shared a copy of his official request on his Telegram channel on October 21 and accused Sobyenin of publicizing the location of an air defense production plant in the Rudnevo industrial zone in Nekrasovka, Moscow Oblast during the plant's opening on October 17, making the facility an easier target for Ukrainian drone strikes.[24] ISW has repeatedly observed Russian sources blame Sobyenin and his administration for the inability of Moscow's air defenses to stop Ukrainian drone strikes.[25] Russian state news outlet *Kommersant* reported on September 28 that Stupin left Russia several months after the Russian Ministry of Justice declared Stupin a foreign agent in June 2023.[26] Stupin notably supported protesters who called for Sobyenin's resignation in April 2023 and protested the cutting down of a forest in Kosinsky Park, the logging of which the Russian opposition outlet *SOTA* reported supported the air defense production plant's construction effort.[27]

Kremlin newswire TASS reported on October 20 that Russian authorities confirmed Colonel General Viktor Afzalov in his previous acting role as Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Aerospace (VKS) Forces.[28] Kremlin newswire *RIA Novosti* reported on August 23 that Putin formally dismissed Wagner-affiliated Army General Sergei Surovkin as commander of the Russian VKS and replaced him with Afzalov.[29]

Key Takeaways:

- **Ukrainian forces have likely repelled another intensified Russian offensive effort towards Avdiivka in the past several days and inflicted further heavy personnel and equipment losses on Russian troops in the area.**
- **Russian forces are struggling to interdict Ukrainian efforts to supply and reinforce newly captured positions on the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast.**
- **Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations near Bakhmut and in western Zaporizhia Oblast on October 21.**
- **Russian forces may be diversifying the mix of missiles, guided bombs, and drones used in strikes on Ukrainian rear areas, likely in an attempt to find gaps in Ukrainian air defenses ahead of further strikes over the winter.**
- **Disgraced Moscow City Duma Deputy Yevgeny Stupin formally requested on October 20 that the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) investigate Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyenin for “divulging state secrets.”**
- **Russian forces continued offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line, near Bakhmut, near Avdiivka, southwest of Donetsk City, in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area, and in western Zaporizhia Oblast and advanced in various sectors of the front.**
- **The Russian federal government is reportedly taking steps to rectify some discrepancies in the treatment of personnel in irregular and regular formations.**



We do not report in detail on Russian war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We will continue to evaluate and report on the effects of these criminal activities on the Ukrainian military and the Ukrainian population and specifically on combat in Ukrainian urban areas. We utterly condemn these Russian violations of the laws of armed conflict, Geneva Conventions, and humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

- Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine (comprised of two subordinate main efforts)
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and encircle northern Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis
- Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts
- Activities in Russian-occupied areas
- Russian Information Operations and Narratives

Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

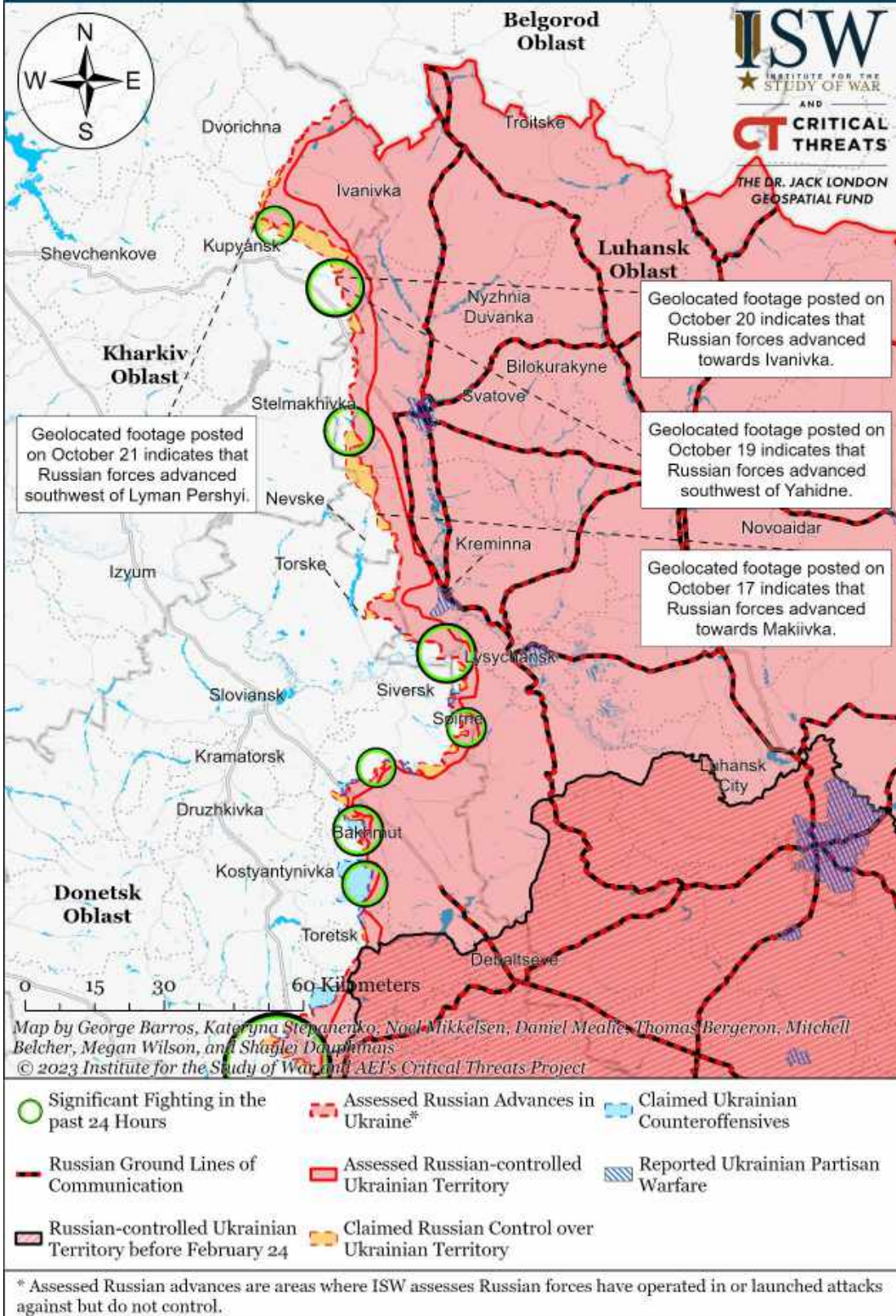
Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Luhansk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and northern Donetsk Oblast)

Russian forces continued offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on October 21 and made recent confirmed advances in the Kupyansk area. Geolocated footage published on October 21 indicates that Russian forces advanced southwest of Lyman Pershyi (11km northeast of Kupyansk) in the direction of Kalynove (8km northeast of Kupyansk).[30] Additional geolocated footage published on October 17 and 20 indicates that Russian forces also recently advanced north of Ivanivka (21km southeast of Kupyansk).[31] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled more than 20 Russian assaults near Synkivka (9km northeast of Kupyansk) and Ivanivka; more than five Russian assaults near Nadiya (15km southwest of Svatove); and 10 Russian assaults near Bilohorivka (12km south of Kreminna), in the Serebryanske forest area (11km south of Kreminna), and near Spirne (24km south of Kreminna).[32] The Ukrainian General Staff also reported that Ukrainian forces prevented Russian forces from advancing near Nevske (20km northwest of Kreminna).[33]

Russian forces reportedly continue to target Ukrainian crossings along the Oskil River near Kupyansk as of October 21. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces stuck two bridges across the Oskil River, allegedly disrupting the transfer of Ukrainian personnel and equipment to the east bank of the river.[34] Russian aviation heavily targeted bridges across the Oskil River near Kupyansk in mid-to-late September 2023.[35] The Russian command likely intends to interdict Ukrainian supply efforts across the river to augment localized Russian offensive operations in the area.

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted unsuccessful counterattacks along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on October 21. The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that elements of the Russian Western Grouping of Forces repelled five Ukrainian attacks near Synkivka and Serhiivka (13km west of Svatove) and that elements of the Russian Central Grouping of Forces repelled ten Ukrainian assaults in the Lyman direction.[36] A Ukrainian military observer stated on October 21 that Ukrainian forces recently advanced two kilometers towards Orlyanka (22km east of Kupyansk), although ISW has not observed visual confirmation of this reported Ukrainian advance.[37]

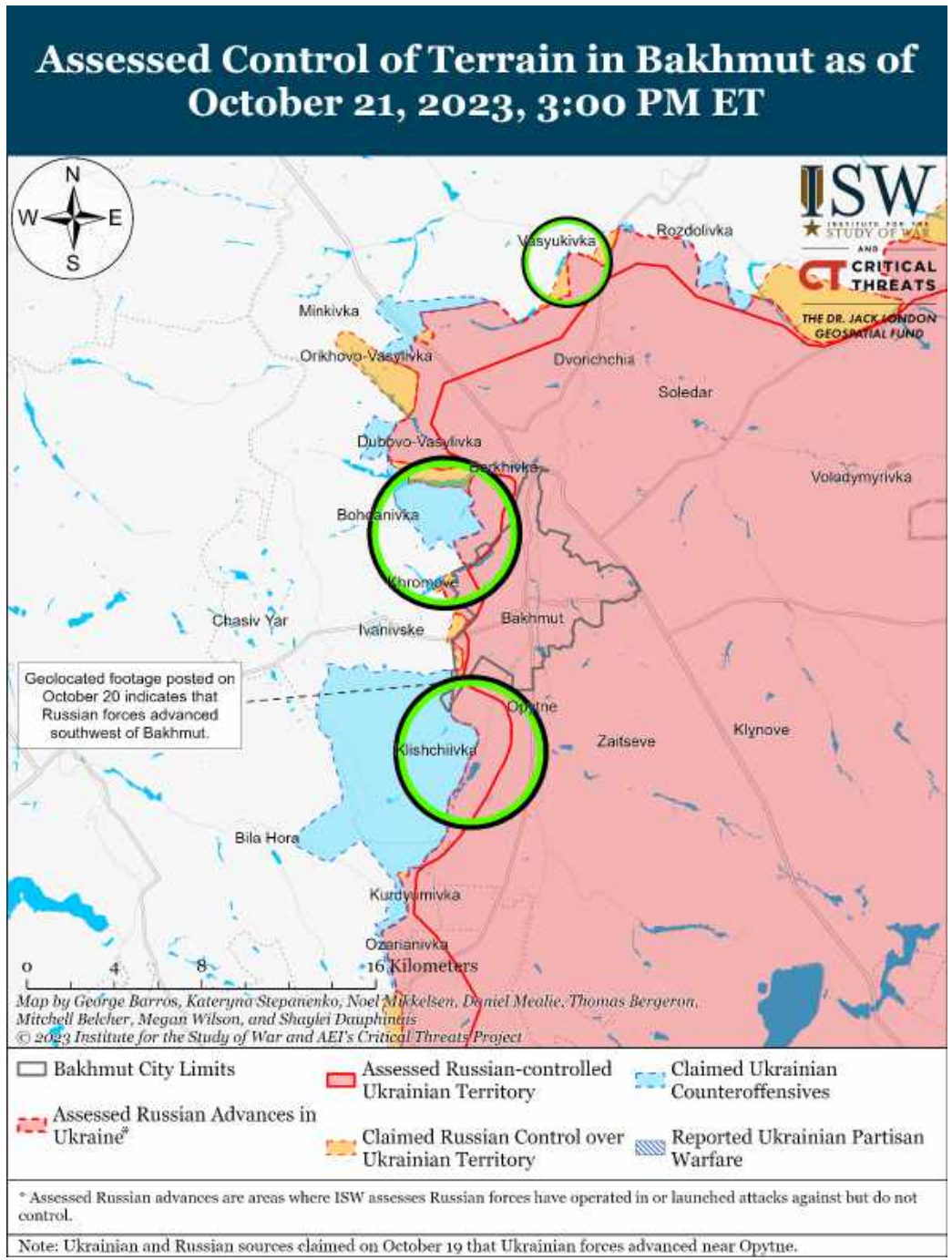
Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of October 21, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Donetsk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)

Russian forces continued ground attacks around Bakhmut on October 21 but did not make any claimed or confirmed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks near Vasyukivka (11km north of Bakhmut), Bohdanivka (5km northwest of Bakhmut) Khromove (1km west of Bakhmut), and Klishchiivka (5km southwest of Bakhmut).[38] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) posted footage reportedly showing signalmen of the 98th Airborne (VDV) Division operating near Bakhmut.[39] Ukrainian military observer Konstantyn Mashovets reported that Russian forces are concentrating their main efforts near Kurdyumivka (13km southwest of Bakhmut) and Zelenopillya (12km southwest of Bakhmut) and trying to equip a defense line along the T05013 road on the Opytne-Zaitseve-Odradivka-Mykolaivka Druha line.[40]

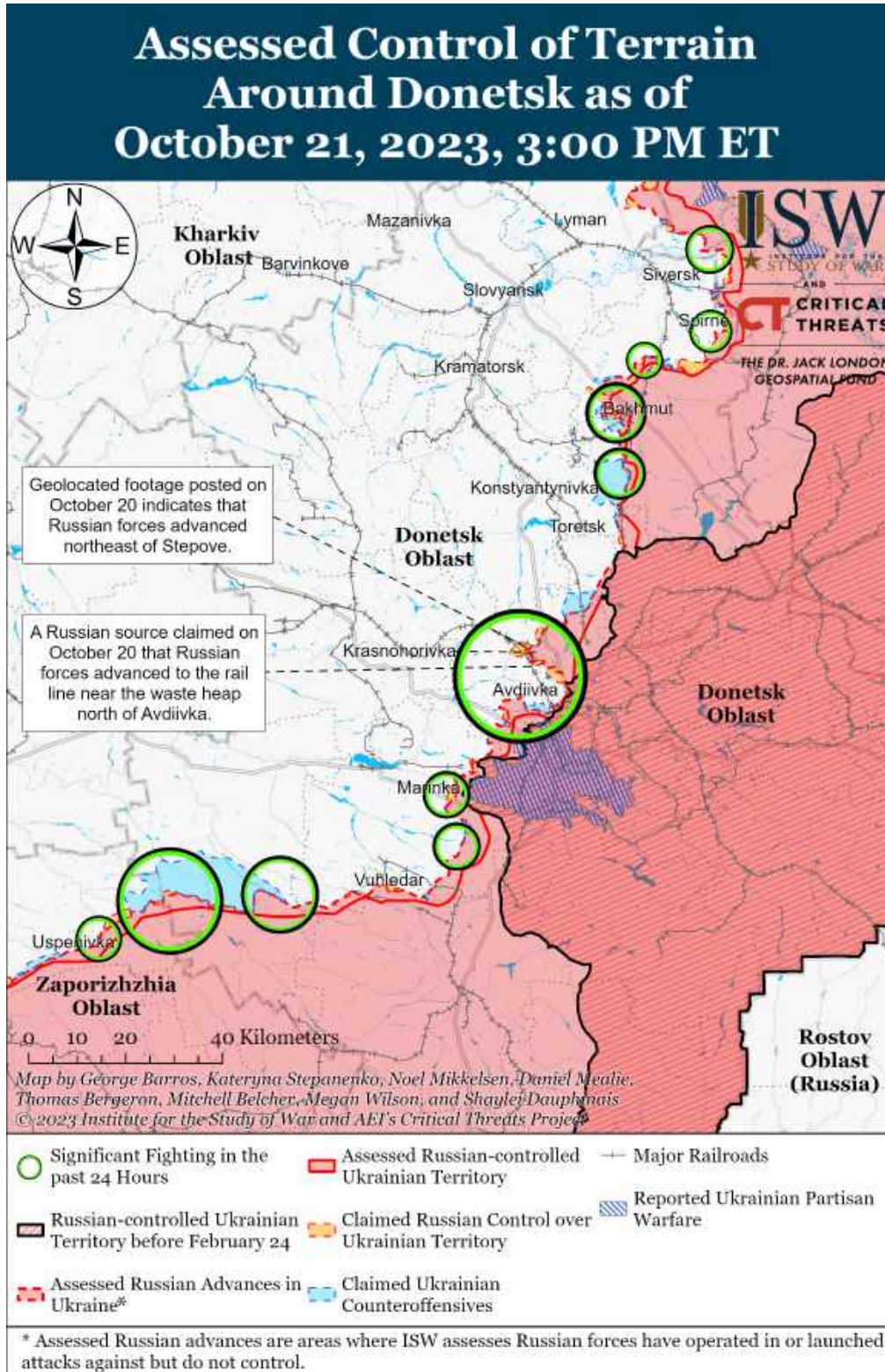
Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations near Bakhmut on October 21 but did not make any claimed or confirmed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff noted that Ukrainian troops continued offensive actions south of Bakhmut.[41]



See topline text for updates on the Avdiivka area.

Russian forces conducted limited ground attacks southwest of Donetsk City on October 21 but did not make any claimed or confirmed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted twenty unsuccessful attacks near Krasnohorivka, Marinka, and Pobieda (all on the southwestern outskirts of Donetsk City), and near Novomykhailivka (25km southwest of Donetsk City).[42] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces continued attacks near Marinka.[43]

Ukrainian forces did not conduct any claimed or confirmed ground attacks southwest of Donetsk City on October 21.

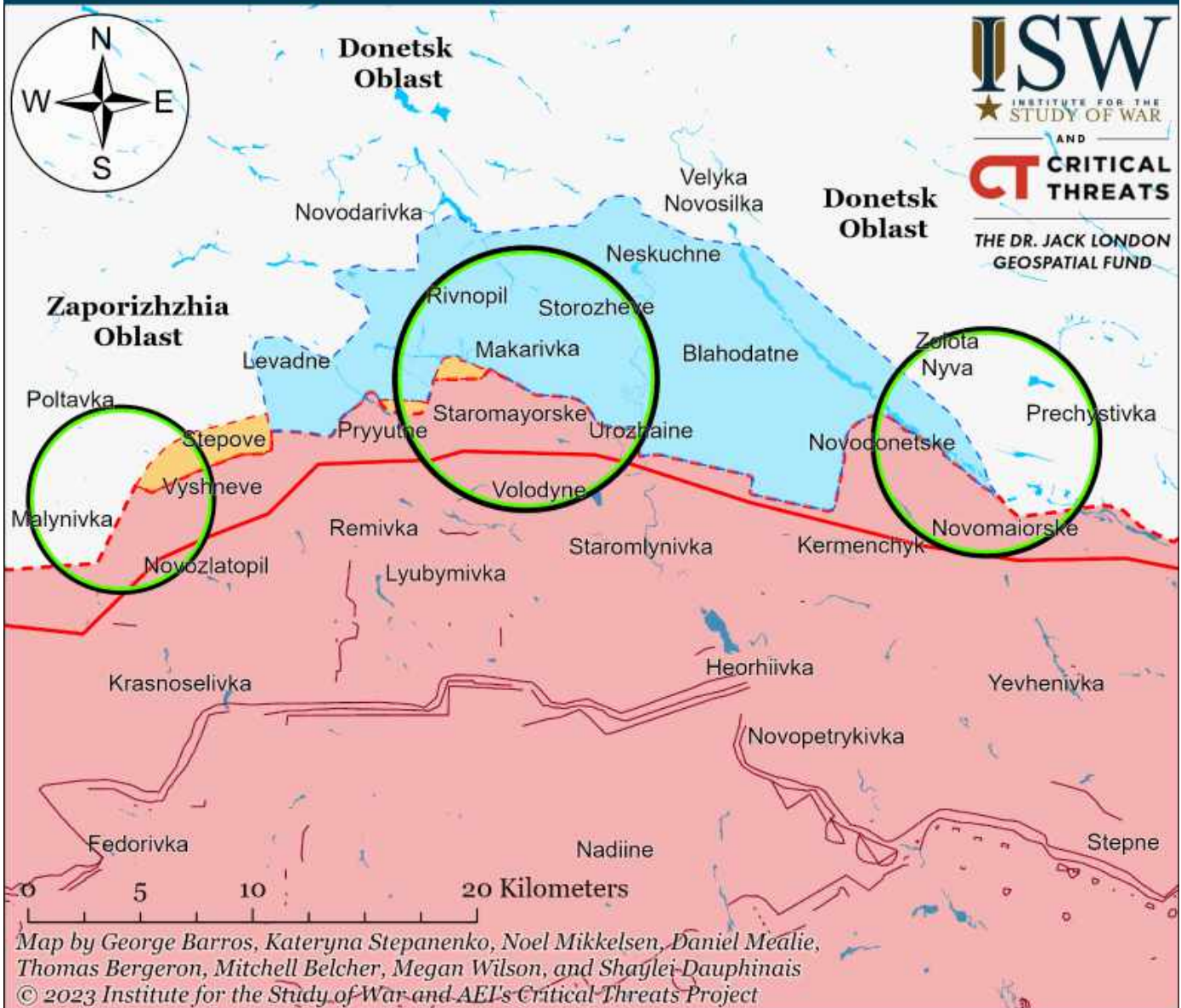


Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions and secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes)

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted unsuccessful ground attacks in the Donetsk-Zaporzhia Oblast border area on October 21. The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked in the direction of Pryyutne (14km southwest of Velyka Novosilka).[44] A Kremlin-affiliated Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked near heights between Pryyutne and Staromayorske (9km south of Velyka Novosilka).[45]

Russian forces conducted ground attacks in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on October 21 but did not make any confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks near Prechystivka (17km southeast of Velyka Novosilka), Zolota Nyva (12km southeast of Velyka Novosilka), Staromayorske, Rivnopil (10km southwest of Velyka Novosilka), Pryyutne, and Poltavka (28km southwest of Velyka Novosilka).[46] A Kremlin-affiliated Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces are slowly advancing north of Pryyutne, and another Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced several hundred meters north of Pryyutne.[47] Russian sources claimed that Russian forces conducted assaults near Staromayorske and Novodonetske (12km southeast of Velyka Novosilka) on October 20.[48]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around the Vremivka Salient as of October 21, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



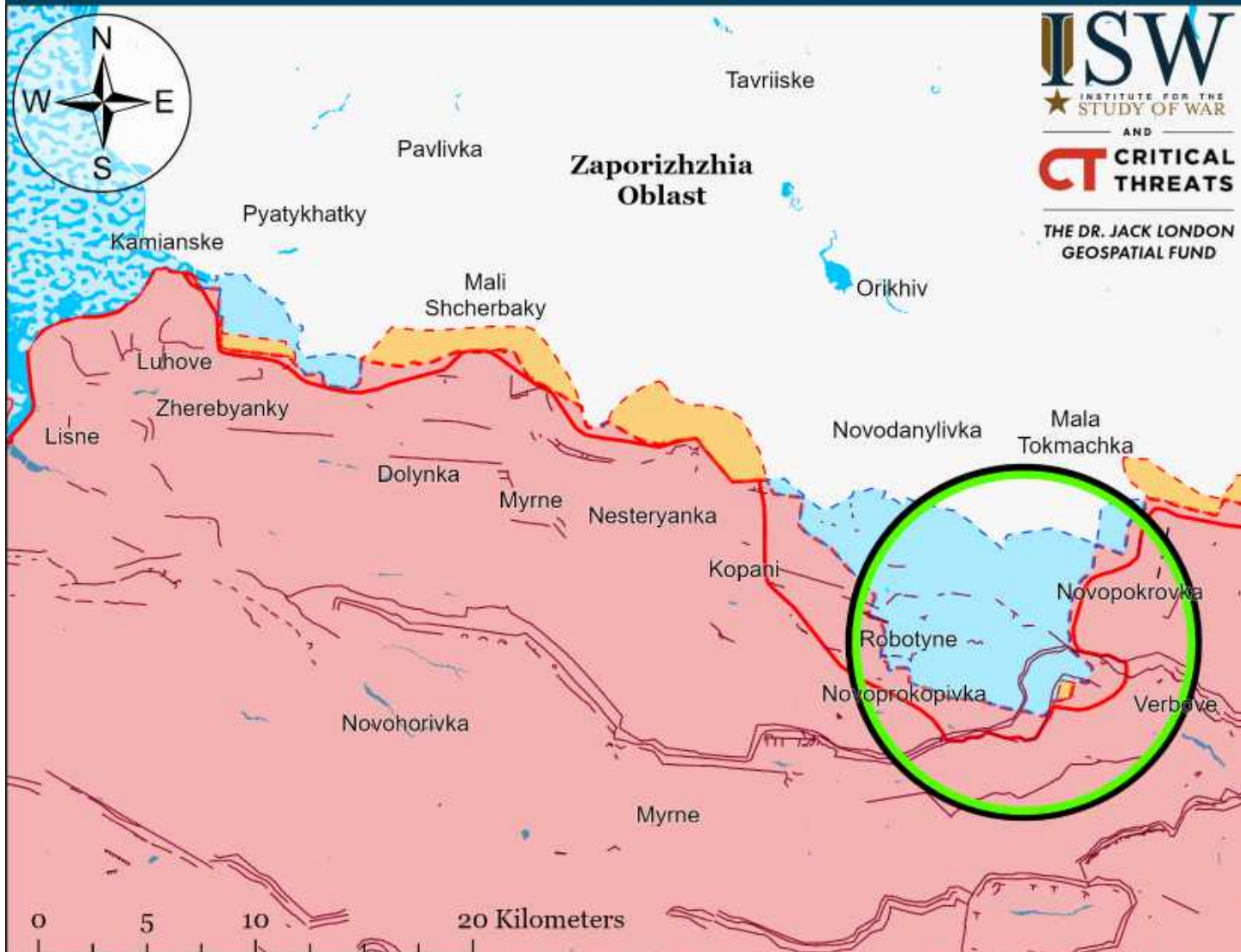
- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Russian Field Fortifications
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives

* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast on October 21 but did not make any confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Melitopol (western Zaporizhia Oblast) direction.[49] Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets stated that Ukrainian forces pushed Russian forces from Robotyne's western outskirts (10km south of Orikhiv).[50] A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces advanced west of Novofedorivka (21km southeast of Orikhiv) and are 6 kilometers away from the settlement.[51] Mashovets also stated that elements of the Russian 247th Airborne (VDV) Regiment (7th VDV Division) retreated several hundred meters towards Novofedorivka.[52] The Russian MoD claimed that Russian forces repelled three Ukrainian attacks near Verbove (10km east of Robotyne).[53] Another prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted mechanized assaults along the Robotyne-Novopropkivka line (up to 2km south of Robotyne) with up to 10 tanks and armored combat vehicles.[54]

Russian forces conducted ground attacks in western Zaporizhia Oblast on October 21 but did not make any confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Robotyne.[55] Mashovets stated on October 21 that Russian forces counterattacked west of Verbove and advanced 200 meters in a nearby forest area.[56] Mashovets added that elements of the Russian 108th VDV Regiment (7th VDV Division) attacked near Novopokrovka (16km southeast of Orikhiv) towards Mala Tokmachka (9km southeast of Orikhiv). Russian milbloggers claimed that fighting continues along the Robotyne-Kopani line (up to 5km northwest of Robotyne).[57] Mashovets suggested that the Russian 104th VDV Regiment (76th VDV Division) may be too degraded to prevent Ukrainian advances towards Novopropkivka.[58]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Pyatykhatky and Robotyne as of October 21, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

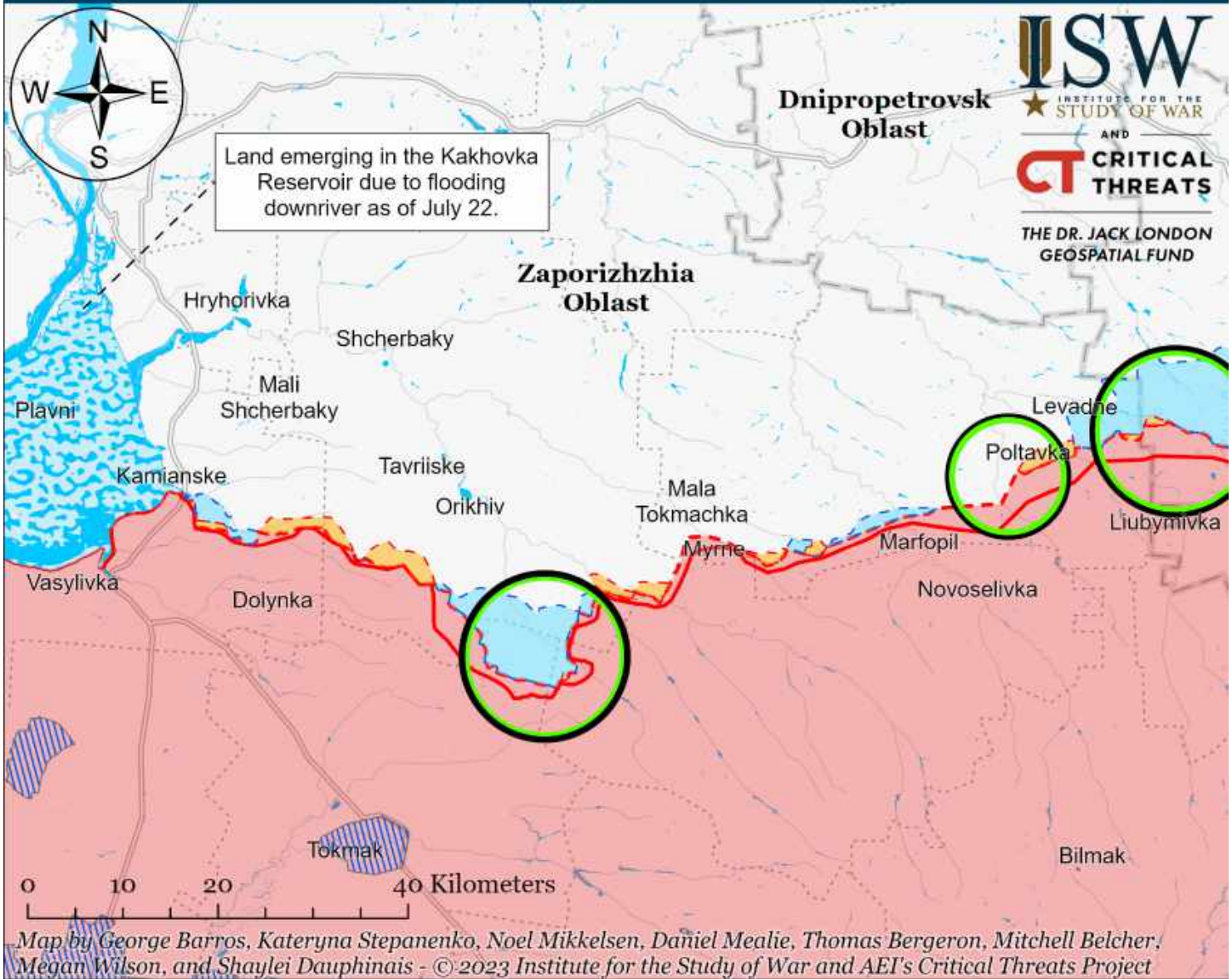


Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Megan Wilson, and Shaylei Dauphinais - © 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours | Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory | Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare |
| Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24 | Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory | Emerging land in the Kakhovka Reservoir |
| Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine* | Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives | Russian Field Fortifications |

* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

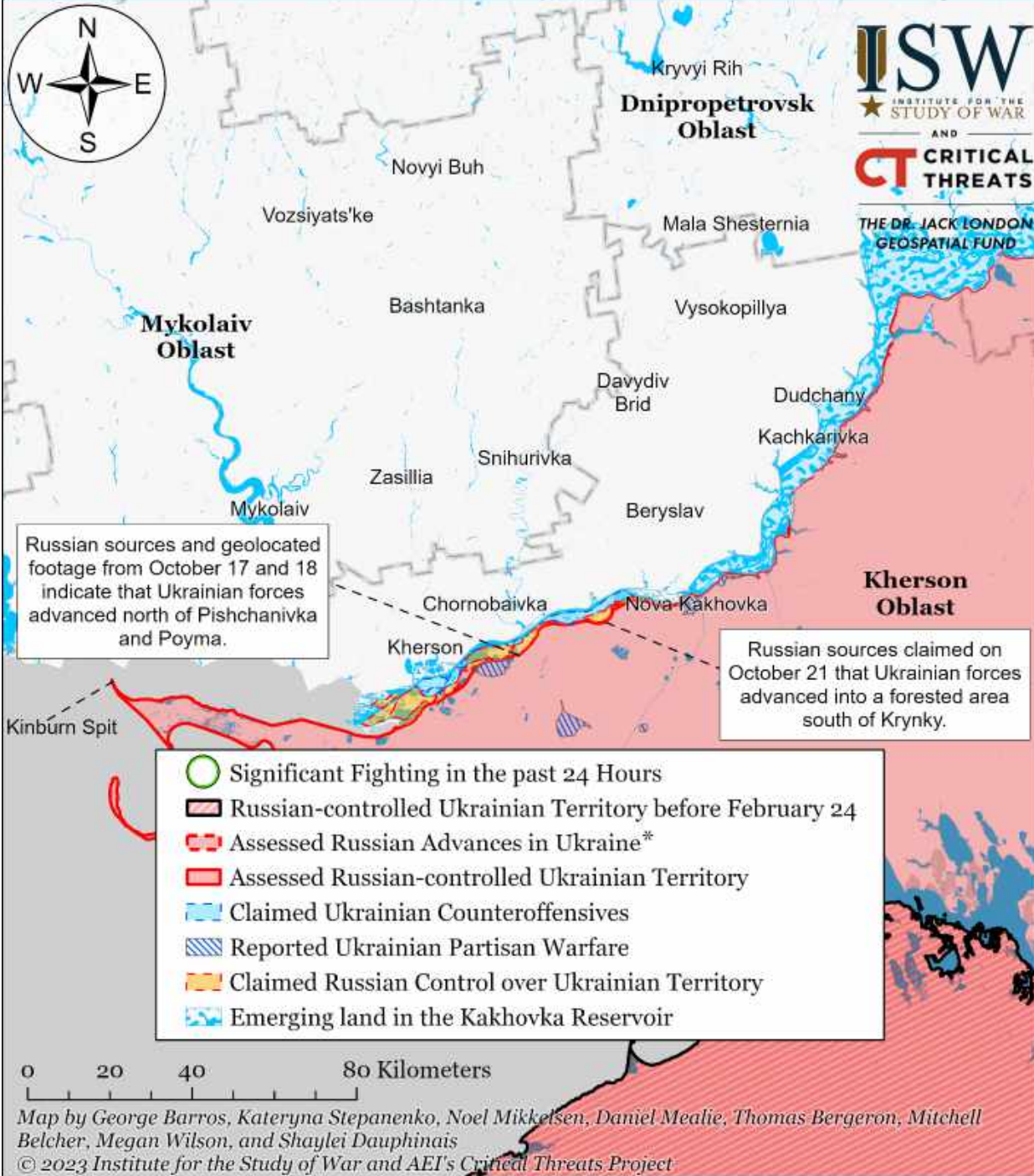
Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhzhia as of October 21, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
- Emerging land in the Kakhovka Reservoir

* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of October 21, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Note: The Ukrainian counteroffensive layer displays areas previously assigned to the Russian control, Russian advances, or Russian claims layers where ISW now assesses that Ukrainian forces have established a presence beyond a short-term raid. Inclusion of an area on this layer does not imply that ISW assesses that the area is part of any upcoming Ukrainian counteroffensive operation.

Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts (Russian objective: Expand combat power without conducting general mobilization)

The Russian federal government is reportedly taking steps to rectify discrepancies in the treatment of personnel in irregular and regular formations. The Russian Vostok Battalion (currently operating in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area) claimed on October 21 that the Russian Presidential Administration and the Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) regional branch of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) worked to clear a backlog of 2,000 requests to award DNR fighters that the DNR MVD had accumulated prior to Russia's illegal annexation of the territory.[59] The Vostok Battalion thanked Russian propagandist and *RT* editor-in-chief Margarita Simonyan for helping bring the issue to the attention of the Russian government. Russia has notably struggled to integrate existing irregular formations into regular formations and provide the irregular formations with benefits provided by Russian law.[60]

Rosgvardia continues to subsume materiel that previously belonged to the Wagner Group. A Russian milblogger posted imagery and claimed on October 20 that Rosgvardia's 116th Operational Brigade has received a Russian T-80BV tank that Wagner reportedly used in the June 2023 rebellion.[61]

Activities in Russian-occupied areas (Russian objective: Consolidate administrative control of annexed areas; forcibly integrate Ukrainian citizens into Russian sociocultural, economic, military, and governance systems)

Russian occupation authorities continue to integrate occupied areas into Russian political infrastructure. Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) Head Leonid Pasechnik claimed on October 21 that over 36,000 residents of occupied Luhansk Oblast have joined the Luhansk Oblast branch of the United Russia Party since its creation a year ago.[62] Pasechnik claimed that the United Russia Party is currently implementing 21 projects and has hosted over 30,000 events aimed at integrating occupied Luhansk Oblast into the Russian legal, social, and political structures.[63]

Russian Information Operations and Narratives

A lawmaker who is a prominent member of the Russian veterans' community claimed on October 20 that Russians who do not support Russian President Vladimir Putin should be "isolated" or "at least somehow destroyed." [64] Russian State Duma Deputy and former Deputy Commander of the Southern Military District (SMD) Lieutenant General Andrei Gurulev claimed that at least 80 percent of Russians trust Putin, which Gurulev claimed indicates Russian unity, and called those who do not trust or support Putin "rot." [65] Prominent Russian left-wing activist Sergei Uldatsov criticized Gurulev for calling for mass reprisals against those who disagree with Putin and stated that he will appeal to the Russian Prosecutor General's Office to investigate Gurulev for extremism. [66]

Significant activity in Belarus (Russian efforts to increase its military presence in Belarus and further integrate Belarus into Russian-favorable frameworks and Wagner Group activity in Belarus)

Nothing significant to report.

Note: ISW does not receive any classified material from any source, uses only publicly available information, and draws extensively on Russian, Ukrainian, and Western reporting and social media as well as commercially available satellite imagery and other geospatial data as the basis for these reports. References to all sources used are provided in the endnotes of each update.

POWERED BY:



BABELSTREET

[1] <https://t.me/BUAR110ombr/139> ; <https://x.com/klinger66/status/1715708408706257156?s=20> ; <https://twitter.com/GirkinGirkin/status/1715628259872797007>

; https://twitter.com/666_mancer/status/1715661050933043564; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidzWQezWiHZj4Ax5XQrcKtXjWwC1PTrMXvkJcu9okPgdR6D3Cr9t3vS4dr8Qr6CCgcl>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02QFSQmxAZNu3cGgseX8rabCEwybRtMYt12kn8K3e6bxiobyxsgqsvAfTyU1S8Lc1Zl>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02usXq4KezVF22gsaRogm69fpyHHY7pRCesqMuTmQJsAzvHVDpxv93PTqDYBSuBWWFI>; <https://armyinform.com dot ua/2023/10/21/komanduvannya-ss0-pokazalo-yak-nashi-voyiny-nyshhat-tehniku-ta-zhyvu-sylu-okupantiv/>

; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9J_kvAcbqS4; <https://t.me/rybar/53451>; <https://t.me/rybar/53455>; https://t.me/dva_majors/27752; https://t.me/negumanitarnaya_pomosch_Z/11488; https://t.me/dva_majors/27748; https://t.me/boris_rozhin/101523; <https://t.me/wargonzo/15938>; <https://t.me/wargonzo/15928>; <https://www.facebook.com/butusov.yuriy/posts/pfbid0JfJaeRNxa5FGNLsUUJNPH2BHkAFFnGHLsM1qRNNeSmmtHphDE8cQ5wMEHREywxHl>

[2] <https://t.me/rybar/53451>; https://t.me/negumanitarnaya_pomosch_Z/11488; https://t.me/dva_majors/27748; https://t.me/boris_rozhin/101523; <https://t.me/wargonzo/15938>; <https://t.me/wargonzo/15928>

[3] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1332>

[4] <https://suspilne dot media/598983-sturm-z-usih-bokiv-z-okupovanih-sil-u-nacgvardii-rozkazali-pro-ataku-avdiivki-de-rf-vtrabila-50-tankiv-i-900-voak/>

[5] <https://rus.err dot ee/1609140164/jestonskaja-voennaja-razvedka-rossija-i-ukraina-prodolzhat-popytki-prorvat-oboronu-drug-druga>

[6] <https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-20-2023>

[7] <https://www.pravda dot com.ua/rus/articles/2023/10/17/7424397/>

[8] <https://t.me/bbcussian/54685>

[9] <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4156>; https://t.me/boris_rozhin/101558; https://t.me/romanov_92/41955; <https://t.me/osetin20/7247>; <https://t.me/osetin20/7248>; <https://t.me/rybar/53478>; <https://t.me/rybar/53455>; https://t.me/dva_majors/27752; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/51458>

[10] <https://t.me/rybar/53478>

[11] https://t.me/romanov_92/41955; <https://t.me/osetin20/7249>; <https://t.me/osetin20/7247>; <https://t.me/osetin20/7248>

[12] <https://t.me/osetin20/7247>; <https://t.me/osetin20/7248>; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4156>; <https://t.me/rybar/53478>

[13] <https://t.me/osetin20/7247>; <https://t.me/osetin20/7248>; <https://t.me/wargonzo/15928>; https://t.me/boris_rozhin/101558; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4156>; <https://t.me/rybar/53455>; https://t.me/dva_majors/27752

[14] https://t.me/romanov_92/41955; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4156>

[15] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar101923>; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar102023>; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar101823>

[16] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0zWQezWiHZj4Ax5XQrcKtXjWwC1PTrMXvkJcu9okP9dR6D3Cr9t3vS4dr8QR6CCgel>

[17] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15928>

[18] https://t.me/dva_majors/27758; <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/55299>; https://t.me/boris_rozhin/101585; <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/55336>

[19] https://t.me/SJTF_Odes/1722; <https://www.facebook.com/OperationalCommandSouth/posts/pfbid0243BFkWqiFvvXTxJ3hLPBDdiiPvVVbHpXDsfH3dDVF19zohAxNfovCapeuDSwfWunl>

[20] https://t.me/SJTF_Odes/1722; <https://www.facebook.com/OperationalCommandSouth/posts/pfbid0243BFkWqiFvvXTxJ3hLPBDdiiPvVVbHpXDsfH3dDVF19zohAxNfovCapeuDSwfWunl>

- [21] https://t.me/SJTF_Odes/1722;
<https://www.facebook.com/OperationalCommandSouth/posts/pfbid0243BFkWqiFvvXTxJ3hLPBDdiiPvVVbHpXDsfH3dDVF19zohAxNfovCapeuDSwfWunl>
- [22] https://armyinform.com_dot_ua/2023/10/21/cziyeyi-nochi-vorog-zastosuvav-skladnu-taktyku-zmishanyh-atak-nataliya-gumenyuk/
- [23] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-8-2023>
- [24] <https://t.me/evstupin/4048> ; <https://t.me/sotaproject/68211>
- [25] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar091223> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar080223> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar080123> ;
- [26] https://www.kommersant_dot_ru/doc/6239230
- [27] <https://t.me/sotaproject/68084>; <https://t.me/sotaproject/56382>
- [28] https://tass_dot_ru/armiya-i-opk/19079113 ; https://www.rbc_dot_ru/politics/20/10/2023/6532cd649a79479f7d8b1abe
; <https://twitter.com/RALee85/status/1715460140890006008?s=20>
- [29] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar082323>
- [30] https://t.me/WarArchive_ua/6426; <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=625709376392005> ;
<https://x.com/blinzka/status/1715511657718268292?s=20> ; <https://x.com/blinzka/status/1715511660906004547?s=20>
- [31] <https://x.com/kyroakokiller2/status/1714206298974179334?s=20>
; <https://x.com/moklasen/status/1715491826826723476?s=20> ; <https://x.com/kyroakokiller2/status/1715421934597427373?s=20> ; <https://x.com/moklasen/status/1715488665097392527?s=20>
- [32] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0zWQezWiHZj4Ax5XQrcKtXjWwC1PTrMXvkJcu9okP9dR6D3Cr9t3vS4dr8QR6CCgcl> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02QFSQmxAZNu3cGgseX8rabCEwybRtMYt12kn8K3e6bxiobyxsgsvAfTyU1S8Lc1Zl>;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02usXq4KezVF22gsaRogm69fpyHHY7pRCesqMuTmQJsAzvHVDPxv93PTqDYBSuBWWFl>
- [33] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02QFSQmxAZNu3cGgseX8rabCEwybRtMYt12kn8K3e6bxioyxsgsvAfTyU1S8Lc1Zl>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02usXq4KezVF22gsaRogm69fpyHHY7pRCesqMuTmQJsAzvHVDpxv93PTqDYBSuBWWFl>
- [34] <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/51458>
- [35] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-19-2023> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-29-2023> ;
<https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-27-2023>
- [36] https://t.me/mod_russia/31697 ; https://t.me/mod_russia/31700
- [37] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1333>
- [38] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0zWQezWiHZj4Ax5XQrcKtXjWwC1PTrMXvkJcu9okP9dR6D3Cr9t3vS4dr8QR6CCgcl>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02QFSQmxAZNu3cGgseX8rabCEwybRtMYt12kn8K3e6bxiobyxsgsvAfTyU1S8Lc1Zl>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02usXq4KezVF22gsaRogm69fpyHHY7pRCesqMuTmQJsAzvHVDpxv93PTqDYBSuBWWFl>
- [39] https://t.me/mod_russia/31679
- [40] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1333>

[41] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02QFSQmxAZNu3cGgseX8rabCEwybRtMYt12kn8K3e6bxiobyxsgqsvAfTyU1S8Lc1Zl>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02usXq4KezVF22gsaRogm69fpyHHY7pRCesqMuTmQJsAzvHVDPxv93PTqDYBSuBWWFl>

[42] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0zWQezWiHZj4Ax5XQrcKtXjWwC1PTrMXvkJcu9okP9dR6D3Cr9t3vS4dr8Qr6CCgcl>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02QFSQmxAZNu3cGgseX8rabCEwybRtMYt12kn8K3e6bxiobyxsgqsvAfTyU1S8Lc1Zl>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02usXq4KezVF22gsaRogm69fpyHHY7pRCesqMuTmQJsAzvHVDPxv93PTqDYBSuBWWFl>

[43] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15928>

[44] https://t.me/mod_russia/31688

[45] <https://t.me/rybar/53468>

[46] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0zWQezWiHZj4Ax5XQrcKtXjWwC1PTrMXvkJcu9okP9dR6D3Cr9t3vS4dr8Qr6CCgcl>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02QFSQmxAZNu3cGgseX8rabCEwybRtMYt12kn8K3e6bxiobyxsgqsvAfTyU1S8Lc1Zl>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02usXq4KezVF22gsaRogm69fpyHHY7pRCesqMuTmQJsAzvHVDPxv93PTqDYBSuBWWFl>

[47] https://t.me/voin_dv/5564; <https://t.me/rybar/53468>

[48] <https://t.me/rybar/53451>; <https://t.me/readovkanews/68156>

[49] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0zWQezWiHZj4Ax5XQrcKtXjWwC1PTrMXvkJcu9okP9dR6D3Cr9t3vS4dr8Qr6CCgcl>

[50] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1332>

[51] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15928>

[52] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1332>

[53] https://t.me/mod_russia/31698; https://t.me/mod_russia/31703

[54] https://t.me/dva_majors/27758

[55] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02QFSQmxAZNu3cGgseX8rabCEwybRtMYt12kn8K3e6bxiobyxsgqsvAfTyU1S8Lc1Zl>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02usXq4KezVF22gsaRogm69fpyHHY7pRCesqMuTmQJsAzvHVDPxv93PTqDYBSuBWWFl>

[56] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1332>

[57] <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/55299>; https://t.me/boris_rozhin/101585; <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/55336>

[58] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1332>

[59] https://t.me/batalyon_vostok/225

[60] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-august-14-2023>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-august-7>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-february-27-2023>; https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Russian%20Offensive%20Campaign%20Assessment%2C%20October%201%2C%202023%20%28PDF%29_o.pdf

[61] https://vk.com/milinfo?w=wall-123538639_3887924

[62] https://t.me/glava_lnr_info/1673

[63] https://t.me/glava_lnr_info/1673

[64] <https://t.me/bazabazon/22388>

[65] <https://t.me/bazabazon/22388>; <https://t.me/rusbrief/166765>

[66] <https://t.me/udaltsov1977/12302>; <https://t.me/rusbrief/166765>

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, October 20, 2023

Riley Bailey, Grace Mappes, Nicole Wolkov, Karolina Hird, and Mason Clark

October 20, 2023, 4:00 pm ET

Click [here](#) to see ISW’s interactive map of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

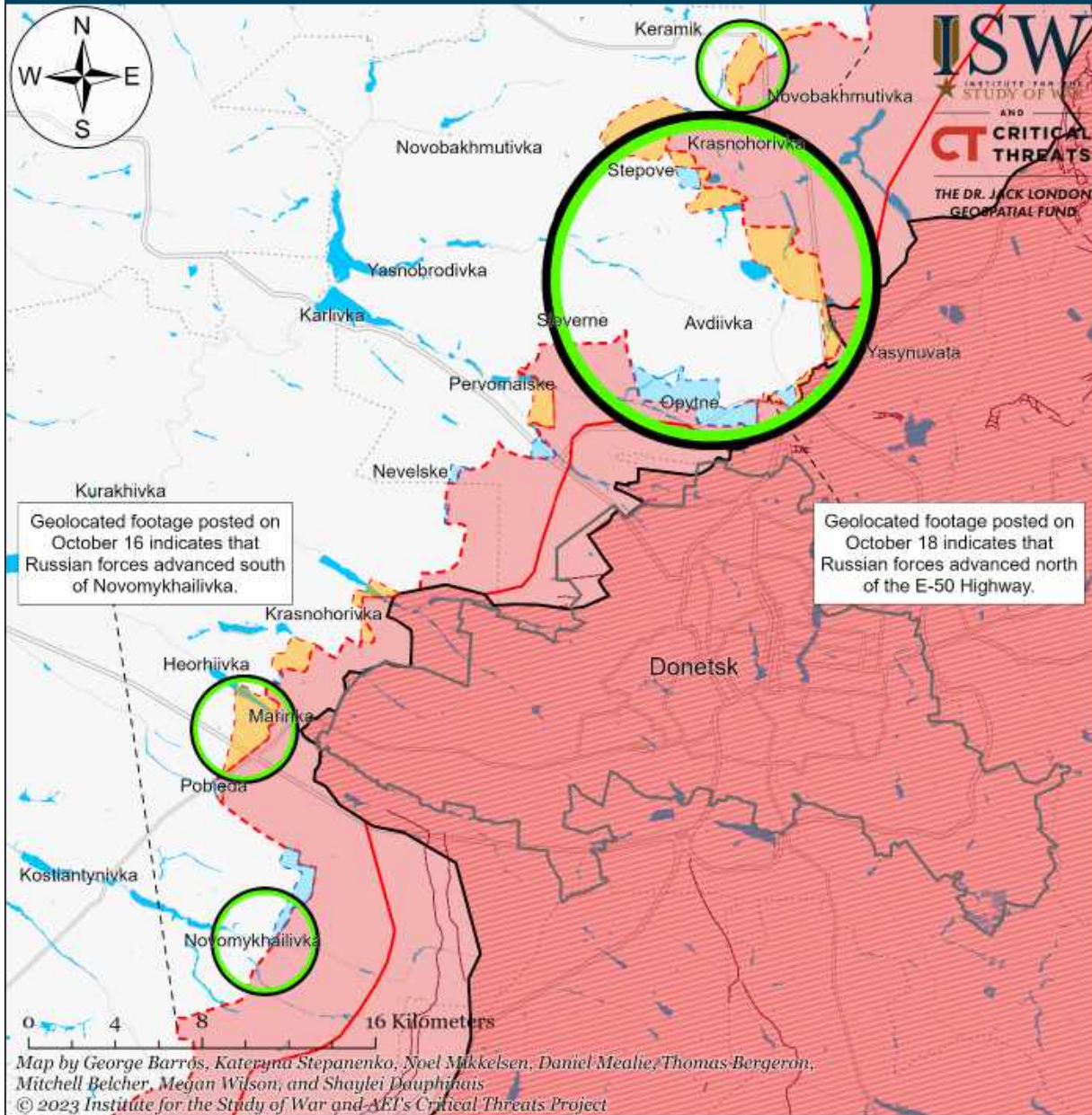
Click [here](#) to access ISW’s archive of interactive time-lapse maps of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. These maps complement the static control-of-terrain map that ISW produces daily by showing a dynamic frontline. ISW will update this time-lapse map archive monthly.

Note: The data cut-off for this product was 1:30 pm ET on October 20. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the October 21 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Russian forces launched a renewed offensive push near Avdiivka on October 20 and marginally advanced, indicating that the Russian military command remains committed to offensive operations in the area despite heavy materiel and personnel losses. Geolocated footage published on October 20 shows that Russian forces secured minor advances west of Krasnohorivka (5km north of Avdiivka).[1] Russian milbloggers and a Ukrainian military observer claimed that Russian forces captured a Ukrainian stronghold near the waste heap just northeast of Avdiivka, advanced to a rail station north of Avdiivka, and advanced near the “Tsarska Okhota” restaurant south of Avdiivka.[2] One prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Sieverne (6km west of Avdiivka), south of Avdiivka, near Stepove (8km northwest of Avdiivka), and near Novokalynove (11km northwest of Avdiivka), however.[3] Other milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced up to one kilometer on the Stepove-Berdychi line (8-10km northwest of Avdiivka) on October 19 and that fighting is ongoing near Berdychi on October 20.[4] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks near Avdiivka, Novokalynove, Stepove, Pervomaiske (11km southwest of Avdiivka), and Sieverne.[5]

The Ukrainian General Staff reported on October 20 that Ukrainian forces damaged and destroyed almost 50 Russian tanks and over 100 armored vehicles during the past day of fighting near Avdiivka.[6] Ukrainian soldiers operating in the Avdiivka area reported on October 20 that Ukrainian forces have destroyed 200 Russian armored vehicles in the past four days.[7] Avdiivka City Military Administration Head Vitaliy Barabash stated that Russian forces are attempting to repair damaged equipment while still in the field.[8] Footage published on October 20 shows Ukrainian forces striking a Russian TOS-1 thermobaric artillery system near Avdiivka.[9] A Russian milblogger complained that Russian counterbattery fire near Avdiivka is decreasing in effectiveness due to poor communication and the failure to stockpile munitions ahead of the offensive effort, very likely exacerbating material losses in the area.[10] The initial Russian offensive operations in the Avdiivka area on October 10 also resulted in high verified Russian equipment losses, and the fact that Russian forces regrouped and re-launched assaults after the initial attacks suggests that either Russian forces believe they can feasibly take Avdiivka, or that the Russian military command is poorly prioritizing offensive operations regardless of cost.[11]

Assessed Control of Terrain near Donetsk City as of October 20, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Map by George Barrós, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Megan Wilson, and Shaylei Dauphinais
 © 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

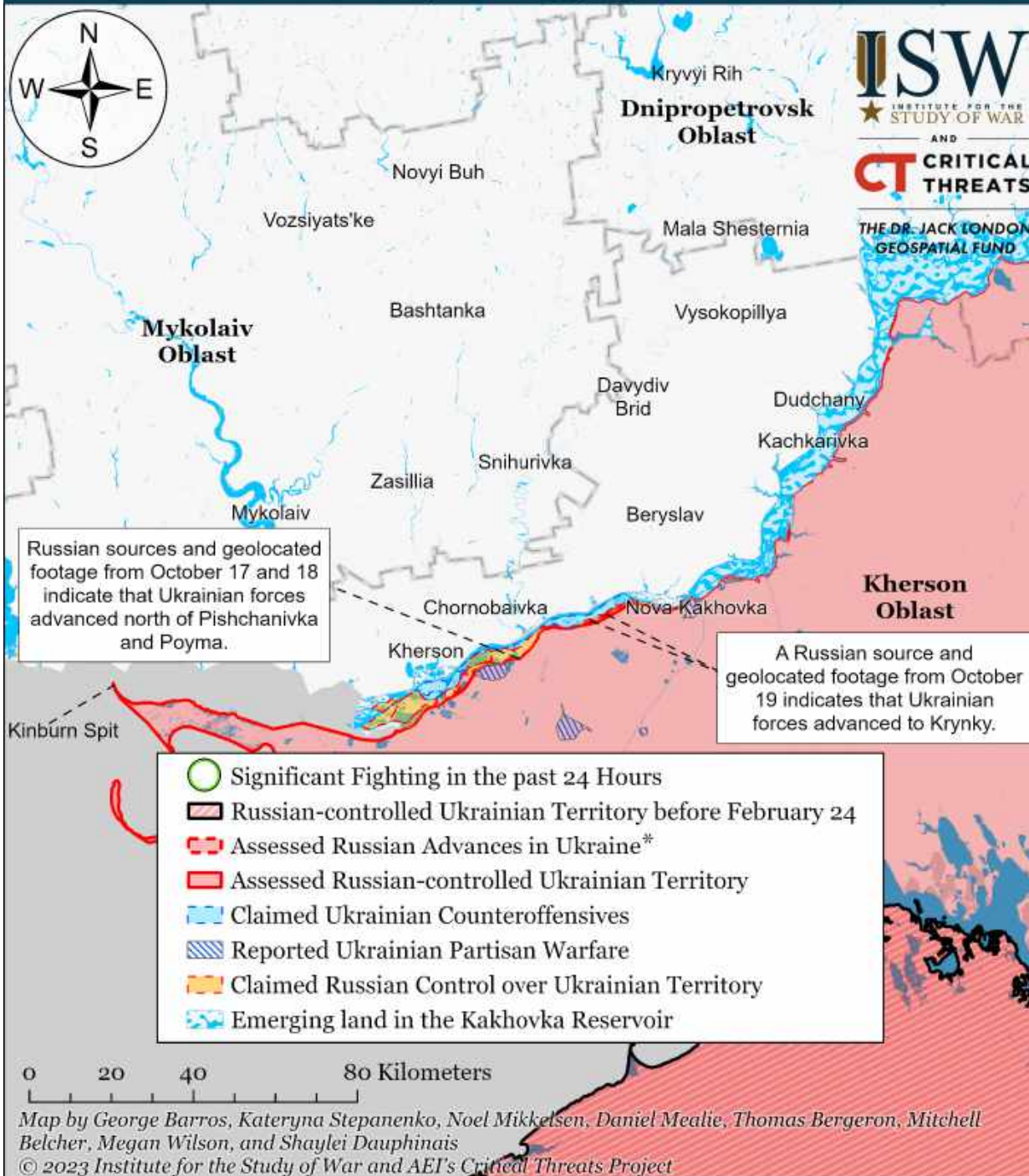
- Donetsk City Limits
- ▨ Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- ▨ Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- ▨ Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- ▨ Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Russian Field Fortifications

* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Note: A Russian source claimed on October 19 that Russian forces advanced one kilometer in depth in the Stepove and Berdyehi directions. A Russian source claimed on October 18 that Russian forces advanced approximately two kilometers in the areas around Avdiivka.

Ukrainian forces continued larger-than-usual ground operations on the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast on October 20 and established a confirmed presence in a settlement on the east bank. Geolocated footage published on October 19 indicates that Ukrainian forces advanced into northeastern Krynky (27km east from Kherson City and 2km from the Dnipro River).[12] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces are establishing a foothold near Krynky and continue to maintain their presence near the Antonivsky roadway and railway bridges.[13] A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces temporarily advanced further into Krynky up to the Kozachi Laheri-Krynky-Korsunka road before Russian airstrikes pushed Ukrainian troops back to the northern outskirts of the settlement.[14] Another Russian milblogger claimed that fighting is ongoing near Pishchanivka (14km east from Kherson City and 4km from the Dnipro River) and that a Ukrainian sabotage and reconnaissance group is operating on the southern outskirts of the settlement.[15] The prominent Russian milblogger suggested that Russian forces only maintained positions on the southern outskirts of Pishchanivka as of the afternoon of October 18, and the Ukrainian General Staff reported on October 19 that Russian aviation struck Pishchanivka, implying that Ukrainian forces were still operating in the settlement.[16] ISW has not observed any other visual confirmation of Ukrainian forces maintaining positions in east bank settlements other than Krynky, however.

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of October 20, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Note: The Ukrainian counteroffensive layer displays areas previously assigned to the Russian control, Russian advances, or Russian claims layers where ISW now assesses that Ukrainian forces have established a presence beyond a short-term raid. Inclusion of an area on this layer does not imply that ISW assesses that the area is part of any upcoming Ukrainian counteroffensive operation.

Russian and Ukrainian sources continue to indicate that the Russian units defending the east bank of Kherson Oblast are relatively less combat effective than other Russian forces elsewhere on the front. A Ukrainian military observer stated that the Russian Dnepr Grouping of Forces is primarily comprised of elements of the 49th Combined Arms Army (Southern Military District) and likely elements of the newly created 18th Combined Arms Army.[17] The majority of the 49th Combined Arms Army (CAA) has been deployed to east bank Kherson Oblast since Russian forces withdrew from the west (right) bank, and elements of the 49th CAA's 205th Motorized Rifle Regiment have since suffered significant casualties.[18] The United Kingdom Ministry of Defense (UK MoD) reported on August 21 that the Russian military was likely forming the new 18th CAA from other units currently operating in Kherson Oblast, and it is unlikely that the new units of the 18th CAA are entirely comprised of fresh forces or staffed to doctrinal end strength.[19] The deployment of the 18th CAA to Kherson Oblast is reminiscent of the rushed deployment of the newly created 25th CAA to the Kupyansk and Lyman directions in early September 2023, and the 18th CAA likely faces similar issues with a lack of personnel, equipment, and proper training.[20] A Russian milblogger claimed that elements of the 26th Motorized Rifle Regiment, reportedly of 70th Motorized Rifle Division of the 18th CAA, are defending against Ukrainian activities near Krynyky.[21] Another Russian milblogger claimed that elements of the 1st Battalion of the 177th Naval Infantry Regiment (Caspian Flotilla) are operating near the Antonivsky railway bridge.[22] Elements of the 177th Naval Infantry Regiment have been defending in western Zaporizhia Oblast since the start of the Ukrainian counteroffensive and have likely suffered significant casualties.[23]

Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations near Bakhmut and in western Zaporizhia Oblast but did not make confirmed advances. A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces made marginal advances northwest of Verbove (10km east of Robotyne), though ISW has not observed evidence to confirm this claim.[24] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continue offensive operations in the Bakhmut and Melitopol (western Zaporizhia Oblast) directions.[25] Russian sources reported Ukrainian attacks south of Bakhmut on the Klishchiivka-Andriivka-Kurdyumivka line and south of Orikhiv near Robotyne, Novoprokopivka, and Verbove.[26]

Russian President Vladimir Putin visited the Southern Military District (SMD) headquarters in Rostov-on-Don, Rostov Oblast, on October 19 to discuss the battlefield situation in Ukraine. Russian media reported that Putin met with the Chief of the Russian General Staff and overall theater commander for Russian forces in Ukraine Army General Valery Gerasimov, who told Putin that Russian troops are "solving problems in accordance with the operation plan." [27] Various elements of the SMD are notably currently deployed in critical areas of the frontline — elements of the SMD's 8th Combined Arms Army are conducting offensive operations near Avdiivka in Donetsk Oblast, elements of the 58th Combined Arms Army are defending against ongoing Ukrainian offensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast, and elements of the 49th Combined Arms Army are operating in the Kherson Oblast direction as of late August 2023.[28] Putin's publicized visit with Gerasimov indicates that Gerasimov is still the active figurehead of Russian operations in Ukraine and was likely meant to posture the effectiveness and involvement of the Russian military leadership as Russian forces pursue offensive and defensive operations along multiple sectors of the front. ISW will provide additional updates on Putin's visit to Rostov-on-Don once more readouts become available.

Key Takeaways:

- **Russian forces launched a renewed offensive push near Avdiivka on October 20 and marginally advanced, indicating that the Russian military command remains**

committed to offensive operations in the area despite heavy materiel and personnel losses.

- **Ukrainian forces continued larger-than-usual ground operations on the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast on October 20 and established a confirmed presence in a settlement on the east bank.**
- **Russian and Ukrainian sources continue to indicate that the Russian units defending the east bank of Kherson Oblast are relatively less combat effective than other Russian forces elsewhere on the front.**
- **Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations near Bakhmut and in western Zaporizhia Oblast but did not make confirmed advances.**
- **Russian President Vladimir Putin visited the Southern Military District (SMD) headquarters in Rostov-on-Don, Rostov Oblast, on October 19 to discuss the battlefield situation in Ukraine with Chief of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov.**
- **Russian forces conducted offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line, near Bakhmut, around Avdiivka, west of Donetsk City, in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area, and in western Zaporizhia Oblast and made limited advances in some areas.**
- **Russian Investigative Committee Head Alexander Bastrykin argued on October 20 that Russian authorities should strip migrants of acquired Russian citizenship if they are unwilling to fight in Ukraine.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of October 20, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

We do not report in detail on Russian war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We will continue to evaluate and report on the effects of these criminal activities on the Ukrainian military and the Ukrainian population and specifically on combat in Ukrainian urban areas. We utterly condemn these Russian violations of the laws of armed conflict, Geneva Conventions, and humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

- Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine (comprised of two subordinate main efforts)
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and encircle northern Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis
- Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts
- Activities in Russian-occupied areas
- Russian Information Operations and Narratives

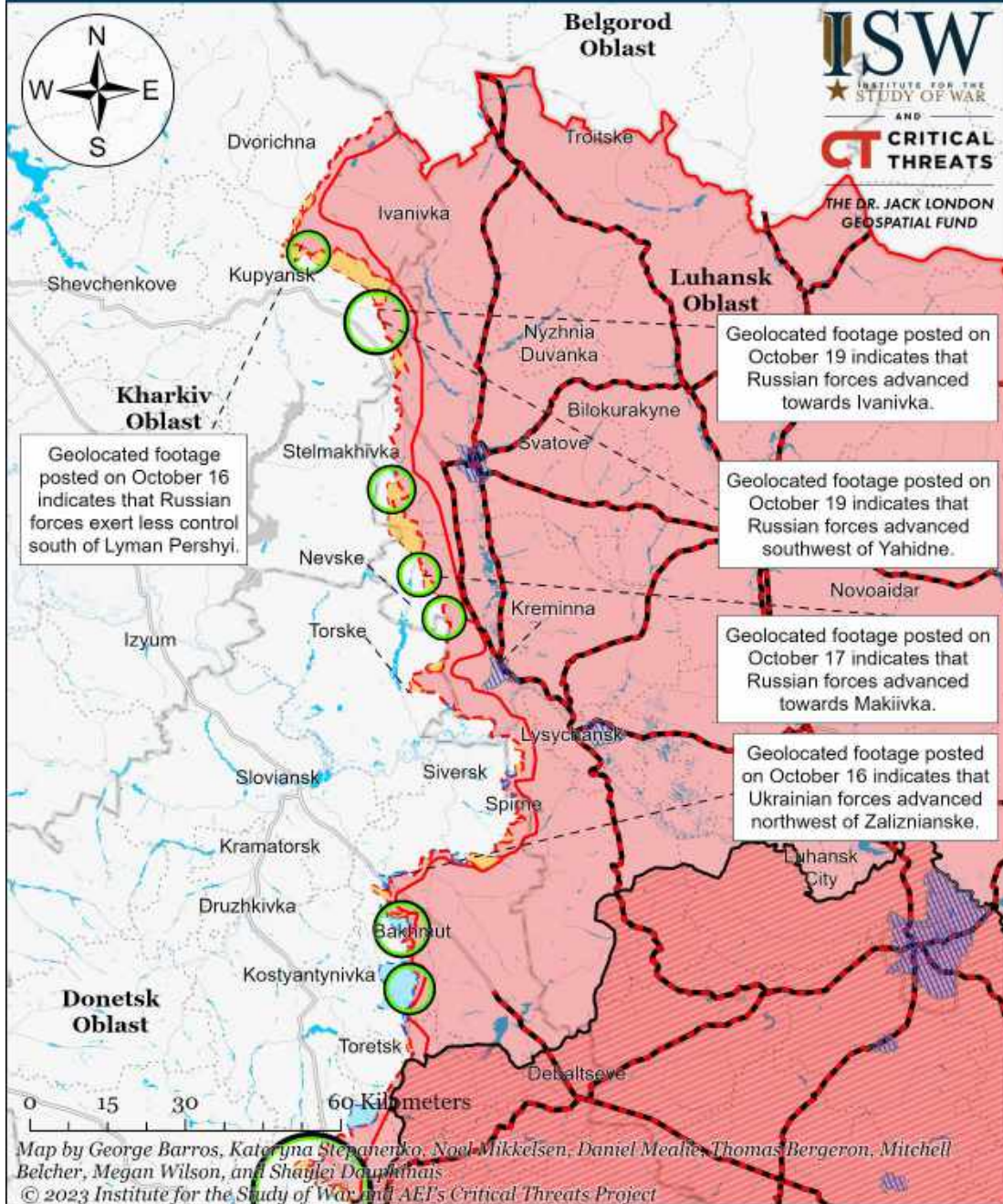
Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Luhansk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and northern Donetsk Oblast)

Russian forces continued offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on October 20 but did not make any claimed or confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian troops repelled Russian attacks in the Kupyansk direction near Synkivka (8km northeast of Kupyansk) and Ivanivka (20km southeast of Kupyansk), west of Svatove near Nadiya (15km west of Svatove), near Makiivka (20km southwest of Svatove), and near Nevske (18km northwest of Kreminna).[29] Russian sources claimed that Russian forces continued attacks near Synkivka, Ivanivka, Nadiya, and Makiivka, and one Russian news aggregator claimed that Russian forces approached the outskirts of Lyman Pershyi (8km northeast of Kupyansk).[30] Ukrainian military observer Konstantyn Mashovets reported that elements of the 26th Tank Regiment (47th Tank Division, 1st Guards Tank Army, Western Military District) and 15th Motorized Rifle Regiment (2nd Motorized Rifle Division, 1st Guards Tank Army, Western Military District) continued attacks north of the Yahidne-Ivanivka area (22km southeast of Kupyansk) but failed to break through towards the N26 Kupyansk-Svatove road.[31] Mashovets noted that Russian forces have shifted their focus towards Petropavlivka (northeast of Kupyansk) and the Stepova Novosilka-Kurylivka direction (directly east of Kupyansk).[32]

The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted unsuccessful ground attacks along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on October 20.[33] Mashovets claimed that Ukrainian forces have advanced up to 400m in an unspecified part of the Kupyansk-Svatove line, although ISW has not observed visual confirmation of Ukrainian advances on this frontline in recent days.[34]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of October 20, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Meaher, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Megan Wilson, and Shajile Dauphinais
© 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours	Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*	Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
Russian Ground Lines of Communication	Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory	Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24	Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory	

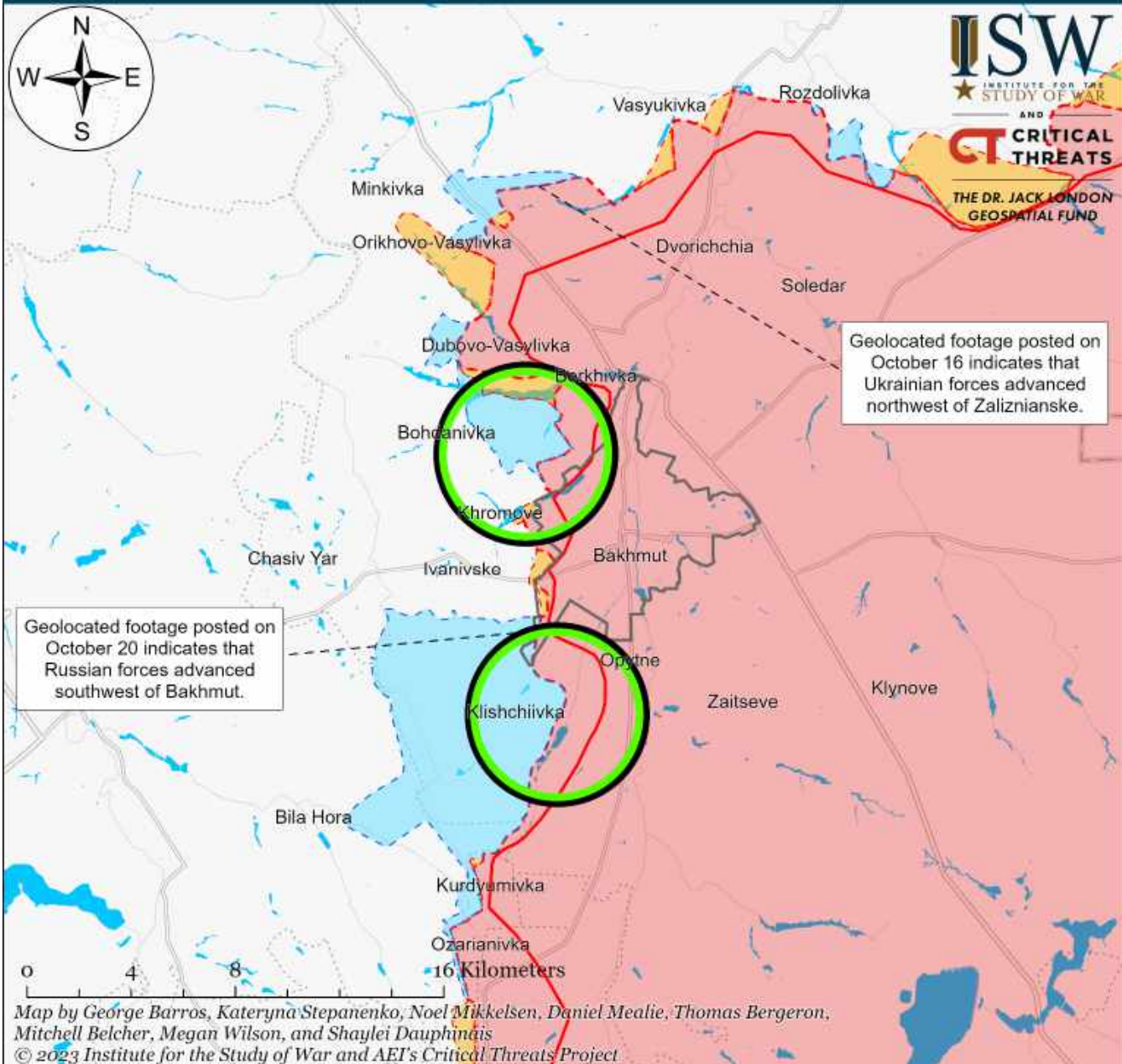
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Donetsk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)

Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations near Bakhmut on October 20 and did not make confirmed advances. Russian sources, including the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD), claimed that Ukrainian forces continued attacks on the Klishchiivka-Andriivka-Kurdyumivka line (7-13km south of Bakhmut).[35] Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets reported that Ukrainian forces advanced up to the railway line east of Klishchiivka.[36] Mashovets reported that elements of the Russian 83rd Separate Air Assault (VDV) Brigade are defending west of Zaitseve (5km east of Klishchiivka), indicating that the 83rd VDV Brigade is likely split across at least two axes, including in western Zaporizhia Oblast.[37]

Russian forces continued counterattacks near Bakhmut on October 20 and recently marginally advanced. Geolocated footage published on October 20 shows that Russian forces recently marginally advanced north of Klishchiivka.[38] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces counterattacked near Klishchiivka.[39] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks near Bohdanivka (5km northwest of Bakhmut), Khromove (2km west of Bakhmut), and Klishchiivka.[40] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces shot down a Ukrainian Mi-8 helicopter in the Bakhmut area, possibly near Chasiv Yar (12km west of Bakhmut).[41]

Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of October 20, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Megan Wilson, and Shaylei Dauphinais
 © 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

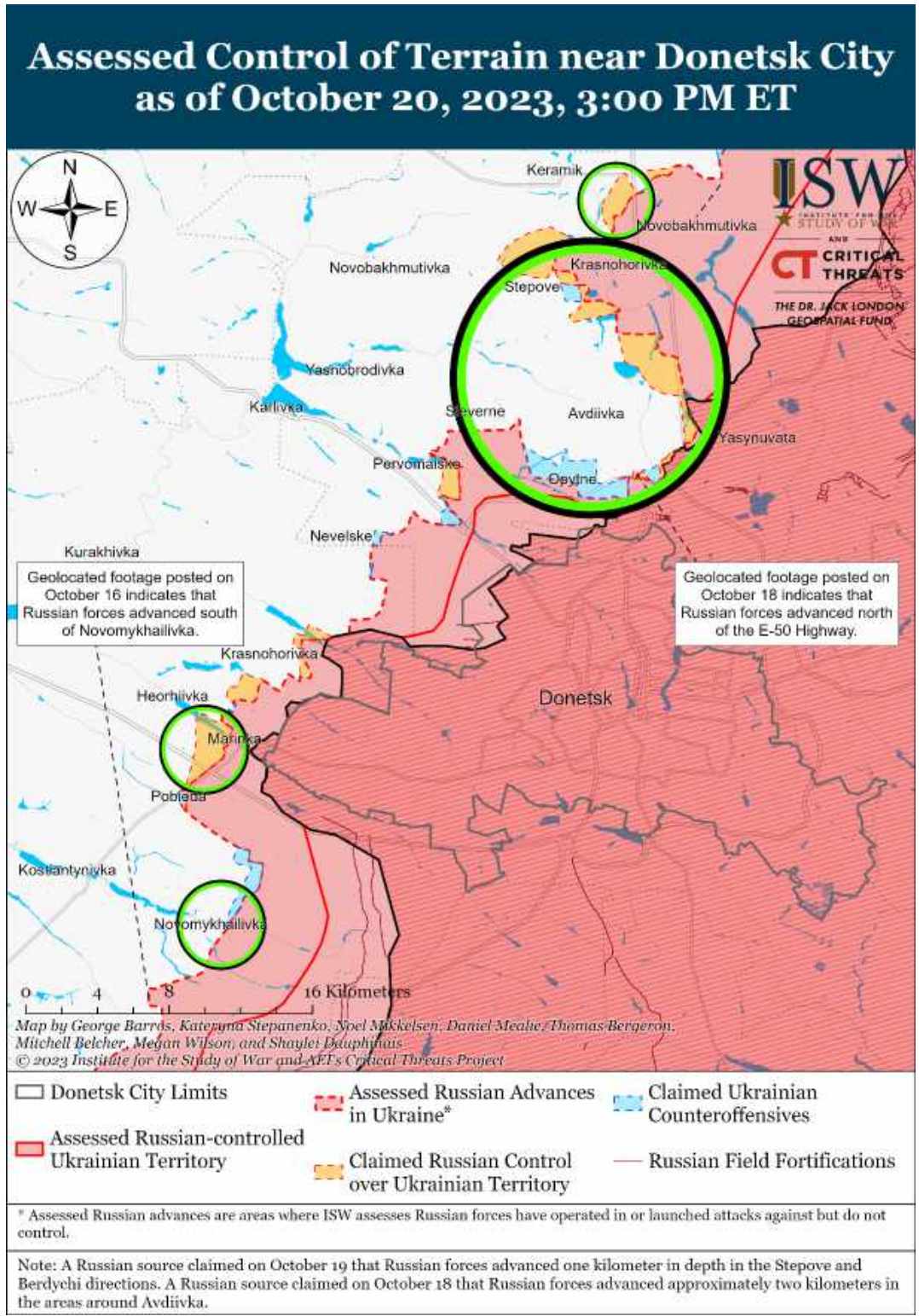
- Bakhmut City Limits
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare

* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

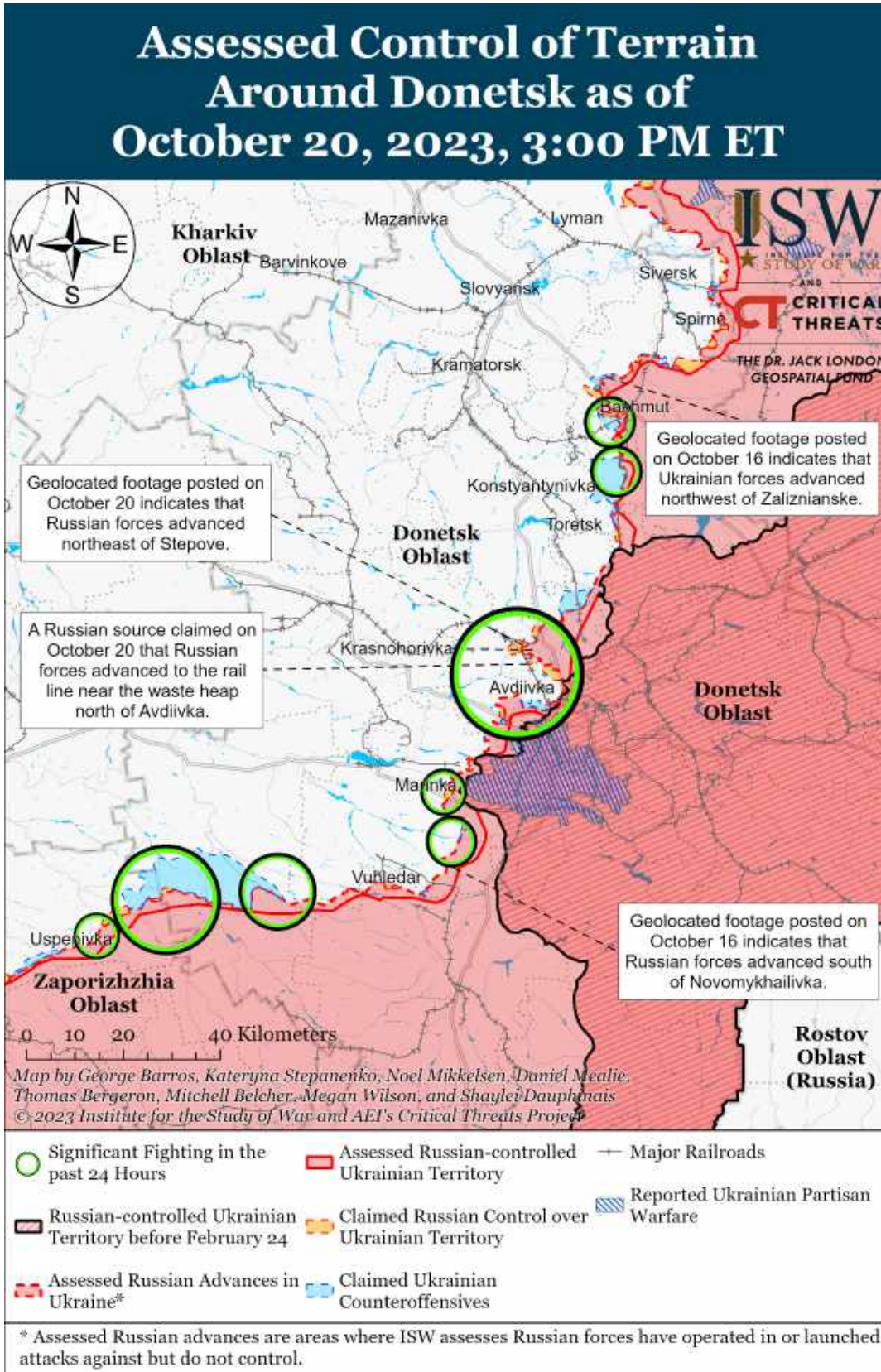
Note: Ukrainian and Russian sources claimed on October 19 that Ukrainian forces advanced near Opytne.

See topline text for updates on the Avdiivka area.

Russian forces continued offensive operations west and southwest of Donetsk City on October 20 but did not make any confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff and Russian sources reported that Russian forces attacked in Marinka (on the western outskirts of Donetsk City) and near Novomykhailivka (25km southwest of Donetsk City).[42]



The Russian MoD claimed on October 20 that Russian forces repelled limited Ukrainian attacks near Vuhledar in western Donetsk Oblast in the past week.[43]

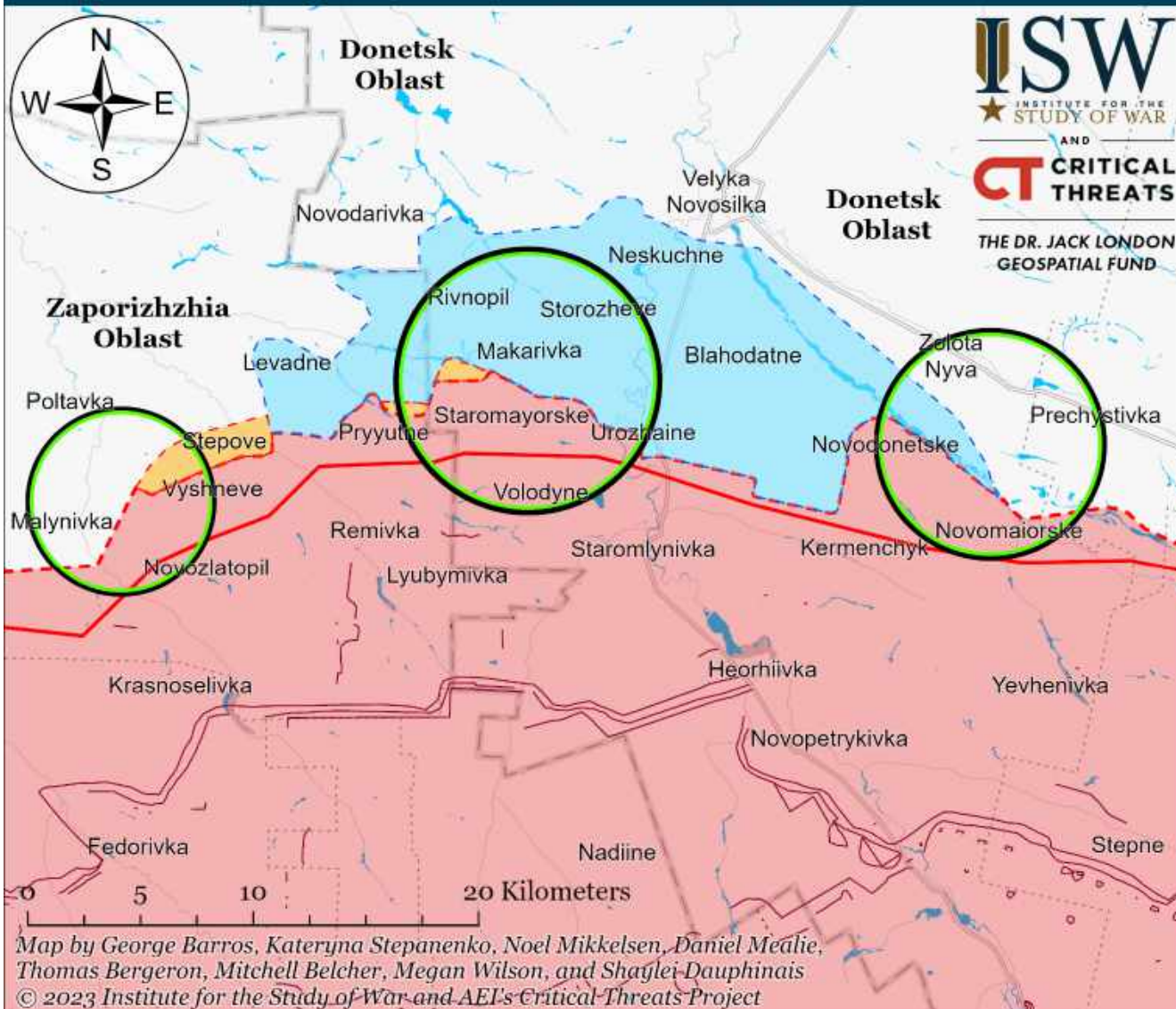


Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions and secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes)

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on October 20. The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) and a Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Urozhaine (9km south of Velyka Novosilka) and Staromayorske (9km south of Velyka Novosilka).[44]

Russian forces conducted offensive operations in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on October 20 but did not make confirmed advances. The Russian MoD claimed that Russian units captured positions in an unspecified area in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area in the past week, though ISW has not observed evidence of recent Russian advances in this sector to confirm this claim.[45] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces achieved some successes near Pryyutne (14km southwest of Velyka Novosilka), although ISW has not observed evidence to support this claim.[46] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks near Zolota Nyva (12km southeast of Velyka Novosilka), Staromayorske, Rivnopil (10km southwest of Velyka Novosilka), and Poltavka (28km southwest of Velyka Novosilka).[47] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Novodonetske (12km southeast of Velyka Novosilka) and southwest of Staromayorske.[48] The Russian “Vostok” Battalion, which reportedly operates in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area, claimed that operations in the Velyka Novosilka are limited to minor skirmishes and artillery duels because Russian forces in the area lack the reserves for offensive actions due to offensive operations in other sectors of the front.[49]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around the Vremivka Salient as of October 20, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

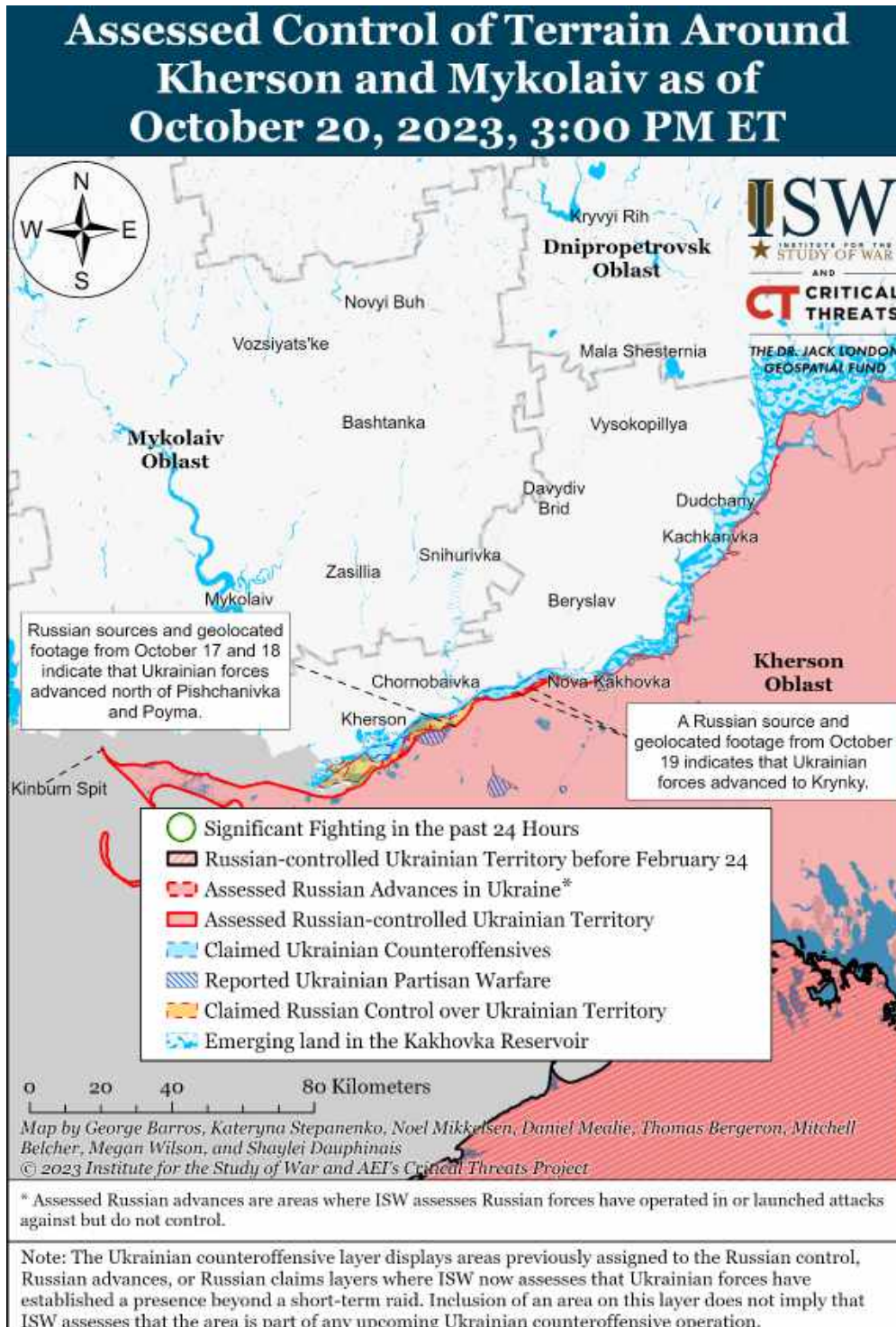
Ukrainian forces conducted offensive operations in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast on October 20 but did not make any confirmed advances. A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces made marginal advances northwest of Verbove (10km east of Robotyne), though ISW has not observed evidence to confirm this claim.[50] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continue offensive operations in the Melitopol (western Zaporizhzhia direction).[51] The Russian MoD claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Robotyne and Verbove.[52] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces attacked near Novoprokopivka (2km south of Robotyne).[53]

Russian forces conducted offensive operations in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast on October 20 but did not make any confirmed or claimed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks near Robotyne and Verbove.[54] Footage published on October 19 and 20 purportedly shows elements of the 247th Airborne (VDV) Regiment (7th VDV Division) and mobilized personnel of the 387th Motorized Rifle Regiment (likely of the 7th VDV Division) operating near Verbove.[55]



See topline text for updates on Kherson Oblast.

Russian occupation officials claimed that Ukrainian forces launched missiles targeting Russian rear areas in southern Ukraine on October 20. Kherson Oblast occupation head Vladimir Saldo claimed that Ukrainian forces launched between 10 to 15 missiles at Russian occupied Kherson Oblast and Crimea and that Russian forces shot down five missiles over occupied Kherson Oblast.[56] Sevastopol occupation governor Mikhail Razvozhaev claimed that Russian air defenses shot down a missile over the Black Sea near occupied Lyubymivka, Crimea.[57]



Russian Aerospace (VKS) forces are beginning airspace patrols over the Black Sea, in line with Russian President Vladimir Putin's October 18 announcement that VKS forces are beginning to patrol the airspace over the Black Sea with MiG-31 aircraft armed with Kh-47M2 Kinzhal hypersonic air-launched ballistic missile systems.[58] Satellite imagery published on October 15 shows that Russian forces deployed four MiG-31 aircraft to the Belbek airfield in occupied Sevastopol.[59] Ukrainian Air Force Spokesperson Colonel Yuriy Ihnat stated on October 20 that the Russian military constantly moves aircraft due to fears of Ukrainian missile strikes and that the deployment of MiG-31 aircraft at Belbek airfield will have little effect on Russian operations.[60]

Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts (Russian objective: Expand combat power without conducting general mobilization)

Russian Investigative Committee Head Alexander Bastrykin argued on October 20 that Russian authorities should strip migrants of acquired Russian citizenship if they are unwilling to fight in Ukraine.[61] The Russian State Duma proposed a bill on August 28 that would deprive individuals of their acquired Russian citizenship for evading military registration and mobilization, prompting varied reactions of support and opposition among Russian sources.[62] Russian authorities regularly conduct raids on migrant communities in Russia and issue summonses to those with acquired Russian citizenship who have not yet registered with military registration and recruitment offices.[63] Bastrykin's comments are likely meant to further pressure individuals with acquired citizenship to register with Russian military registration and recruitment offices. Russian authorities are also currently coercing migrants and foreigners living in Russia to fight in the war in Ukraine in exchange for Russian citizenship.[64]

Russian state-owned defense conglomerate Rostec announced on October 20 that it completed tests of the "Koalitsiya-SV" self-propelled artillery system and claimed that Rostec is prepared to start serial production of the system.[65] Russian milbloggers claimed that the new artillery system has a wider range and is more accurate than previous systems, and one prominent milblogger expressed hope that the production of the system will address poor Russian counterbattery capabilities.[66] Russian sources routinely complain about poor Russian counterbattery capabilities throughout the frontline in Ukraine, and Russian forces are unlikely to systematically improve these capabilities in the near term.[67]

Activities in Russian-occupied areas (Russian objective: Consolidate administrative control of annexed areas; forcibly integrate Ukrainian citizens into Russian sociocultural, economic, military, and governance systems)

Russian occupation officials continue to pressure residents in occupied Ukraine to accept Russian passports. The Kherson Oblast occupation administration stated on October 20 that residents will be obligated to use a Russian passport to receive housing certificates and will not be able to use Ukrainian identification documents.[68]

Ukrainian Melitopol Mayor Ivan Fedorov stated on October 20 that Ukrainian partisans blew up a Russian military vehicle near the Russian-controlled airfield in Melitopol, Zaporizhia Oblast.[69]

Russian Information Operations and Narratives

Nothing significant to report.

Significant activity in Belarus (Russian efforts to increase its military presence in Belarus and further integrate Belarus into Russian-favorable frameworks and Wagner Group activity in Belarus)

Ukrainian Commander of the Northern Group of Forces Lieutenant General Serhiy Nayev stated on October 20 that Russian forces currently have deployed three Su-30 attack aircraft and two Su-24 reconnaissance aircraft on Belarusian territory.^[70]

Note: ISW does not receive any classified material from any source, uses only publicly available information, and draws extensively on Russian, Ukrainian, and Western reporting and social media as well as commercially available satellite imagery and other geospatial data as the basis for these reports. References to all sources used are provided in the endnotes of each update.



[1] https://t.me/WarArchive_ua/6389; <https://twitter.com/JonHallin/status/1715292351554281751>;
<https://twitter.com/markito0171/status/1715247847090577844>

[2] <https://t.me/rybar/53411>; https://rybar.dot.ru/piwigo/upload/2023/10/19/20231019194133-cbb79c5c.jpg?utm_source=t.me&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=t.me&utm_referrer=t.me ;
<https://t.me/rybar/53420>; <https://t.me/milinfo/109012>; <https://t.me/readovkanews/68105>;
https://t.me/z_arhiv/25360; https://t.me/dva_majors/27713;
https://t.me/zola_of_renovation/6115 ; https://t.me/notes_veterans/12986;
<https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1328>; <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1328>

[3] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15896>;

[4] https://t.me/dva_majors/27713

[5] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0278wJQsVeWsv2SWnjoG2pcw11ZVk52XpS7S5NkwX1CVvaTx2gz3jPYuSLWxBhB6Enl> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02cqQ4a7XxvNvZHZoUa7...> ;

[6] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02cqQ4a7XxvNvZHZoUa7...> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02cqQ4a7XxvNvZHZoUa7...> ;

[7] <https://suspilne.media/598409-ca-bitva-odna-z-grandioznych-za-cu-vijnu-ak-voue-poltavska-116-ta-brigada-tro-na-doneccini/>

[8] <https://suspilne.media/597795-im-ne-vdastsa-otociti-avdiivku-zbilsilas-kilkist-obstriliv-pogromadi-situacia-19-zovtna/>

- [9] <https://t.me/ssternenko/21706> ;
https://twitter.com/bayraktar_1love/status/1715324855527084044;
<https://x.com/EjShahid/status/1715327584110510455?s=20>;
<https://x.com/UAWeapons/status/1715334730466443280?s=20>;
https://x.com/bayraktar_1love/status/1715324855527084044?s=20
- [10] https://t.me/grey_zone/21279 ; https://t.me/infomil_live/976
- [11] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar101323>
- [12] <https://t.me/vysokygovorit/13205>; <https://t.me/voenacher/54715>;
<https://x.com/moklasen/status/1715103412537192954?s=20>;
<https://x.com/moklasen/status/1715103416127529118?s=20>
- [13] <https://t.me/rybar/53420> ; https://t.me/dva_majors/27713 ; https://t.me/dva_majors/27738
- [14] <https://t.me/rybar/53420>
- [15] <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4145>
- [16] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar101923> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar101823>
- [17] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1326>
- [18] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-april-23-2023> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-...>
- [19] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-...>
- [20] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar090123> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar092323> ;
<https://isw.pub/UkrWar100623>
- [21] <https://cdsdailybrief.substack.com/p/russias-war-on-ukraine-12082023> ;
https://t.me/dva_majors/27738
- [22] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15914>
- [23] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-1-2023> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-august-5-2023> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-...>
- [24] <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4147>
- [25] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02cqQ4a7XxvNvZHZoUa7...> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02cqQ4a7XxvNvZHZoUa7tt9MttmDCceWGfRRRWuuf5NCsPLAz7n2HdVmsqyJWh9mPfl> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0278wJQsVeWsv2SWnjoG2pcw11ZVk52XpS7S5NkwX1CVvaTx2gz3jPYuSLWxBhB6Enl>

[26] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15904>; https://t.me/mod_russia/31673;
https://t.me/boris_rozhin/101461; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4152>;
https://t.me/mod_russia/31672; https://t.me/mod_russia/31667

[27] <https://t.me/RIAKremlinpool/10991> ; <https://t.me/bberussian/54581> ; <https://meduza.io/news/2023/10/20/putin-posetil-shtab-rossiyskih-voysk-v-rostove-na-donu>;
<https://t.me/zvezdanews/131785>; https://t.me/boris_rozhin/101438

[28] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar093023>; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar101123>;
<https://isw.pub/UkrWar100623>; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar092623>; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar092423>

[29] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02cqQ4a7XxvNvZHZoUa7tt9MttmDCceWGfRRRWuuf5NCsPLAz7n2HdVms9yJWh9mPFI> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02cqQ4a7XxvNvZHZoUa7tt9MttmDCceWGfRRRWuuf5NCsPLAz7n2HdVms9yJWh9mPFI>;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0278wJQsVeWsv2SWnjoG...>

[30] <https://t.me/readovkanews/68105>; <https://t.me/wargonzo/15904>

[31] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1328>

[32] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1328>

[33] https://t.me/mod_russia/31665; https://t.me/mod_russia/31672;
https://t.me/mod_russia/31663 ; <https://t.me/readovkanews/68107>

[34] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1328>

[35] https://t.me/boris_rozhin/101461; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4152>;
https://t.me/mod_russia/31672; https://t.me/mod_russia/31667

[36] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1328>

[37] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-sept-16-2023>; <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1328>

[38] https://t.me/WarArchive_ua/6383;
https://www.tiktok.com/@golf_stream475/video/7291569526888467717?_r=1&_t=8gdgTVoqkAc

[39] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15904>

[40] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0278wJQsVeWsv2SWnjoG2pcw11ZV52XpS7S5NkwX1CVvaTx2gz3jPYuSLWxBhB6EnI>;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02cqQ4a7XxvNvZHZoUa7...> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02cqQ4a7XxvNvZHZoUa7...>

[41] https://t.me/boris_rozhin/101484 ; <https://t.me/NeoficialniyBeZsonoV/30192> ;
<https://t.me/RtrDonetsk/21034> ; <https://t.me/milinfoLive/109026>; <https://t.me/rybar/53444>

[42] <https://t.me/readovkanews/68105>; <https://t.me/wargonzo/15896>;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02cqQ4a7XxvNvZHZoUa7...> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02cqQ4a7XxvNvZHZoUa7tt9MttmDCceWGfRRRWuuf5NCsPLAz7n2HdVms9yJW>;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0278wJQsVeWsv2SWnjoG...>

[43] https://t.me/mod_russia/31673

[44] https://t.me/mod_russia/31673 ; https://t.me/voin_dv/5556

[45] https://t.me/mod_russia/31673

[46] https://t.me/voin_dv/5556

[47]
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0278wJQsVeWsv2SWnjoG2pcw11ZVk52XpS7S5NkwX1CVvaTx2gz3jPYuSLWxBhB6Enl> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02cqQ4a7XxvNvZHZoUa7...> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02cqQ4a7XxvNvZHZoUa7tt9MttmDCceWGfRRRWuuf5NCsPLAz7n2HdVms9yJWh9mPFl>

[48] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15896> ; https://t.me/voin_dv/5556

[49] https://t.me/batalyon_vostok/224

[50] <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4147>

[51] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02cqQ4a7XxvNvZHZoUa7...> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02cqQ4a7XxvNvZHZoUa7tt9MttmDCceWGfRRRWuuf5NCsPLAz7n2HdVms9yJWh9mPFl> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0278wJQsVeWsv2SWnjoG...>

[52] https://t.me/mod_russia/31673

[53] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15904>

[54]
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0278wJQsVeWsv2SWnjoG2pcw11ZVk52XpS7S5NkwX1CVvaTx2gz3jPYuSLWxBhB6Enl> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02cqQ4a7XxvNvZHZoUa7...> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02cqQ4a7XxvNvZHZoUa7tt9MttmDCceWGfRRRWuuf5NCsPLAz7n2HdVms9yJWh9mPFl>

[55] <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/55240> ; https://t.me/rusich_army/11430 ;
<https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign...>

[56] https://t.me/SALDO_VGA/1354

[57] <https://t.me/razvozhaev/4261>

[58] <http://kremlin dot ru/events/president/news/72532> ; <https://suspilne dot media/596857-putin-doruciv-litakam-z-kindzalami-postijno-patrulovati-nejtralnu-zonu-nad-cornim-morem/> ; <https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-ass...>

[59] https://twitter.com/MT_Anderson/status/1714813549728383401

[60] <https://armyinform.com dot ua/2023/10/20/rosiya-u-vijni-proty-ukrayiny-vykorystovuyeblyzko-40-aerodromiv-yurij-ignat/>

[61] <https://t.me/astrapress/40792> ; <https://meduza dot io/en/news/2023/10/20/russian-investigative-committee-head-says-naturalized-citizens-who-refuse-to-fight-in-war-should-lose-citizenship> ; <https://t.me/NeoficialniyBeZsonoV/30183> ; <https://t.me/rsotmdivision/11329> ; <https://t.me/rusbrief/166366>

[62] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign...>

[63] <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/09/07/russia-pressure-migrant-work...>

[64] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar082723>

[65] <https://iz dot ru/1592612/2023-10-20/luchshaia-v-mire-po-dalnosti-i-tochnosti-chto-izvestno-o-novoi-sau-koalitsiia-sv> ; <https://t.me/bbcruussian/54601>

[66] https://t.me/z_arhiv/25359 ; <https://t.me/vysokygovorit/13213> ; <https://t.me/sashakots/42872>

[67] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar092123> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar101123> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar091523> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar090523>

[68] https://t.me/VGA_Kherson/14881

[69] https://t.me/ivan_fedorov_melitopol/3551

[70] <https://suspilne dot media/598687-naev-rozpoviv-skilki-litakiv-rf-trimae-u-bilorusi/>

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, October 19, 2023

Karolina Hird, Nicole Wolkov, Angelica Evans, Grace Mappes, and Mason Clark
October 19, 2023, 6pm ET

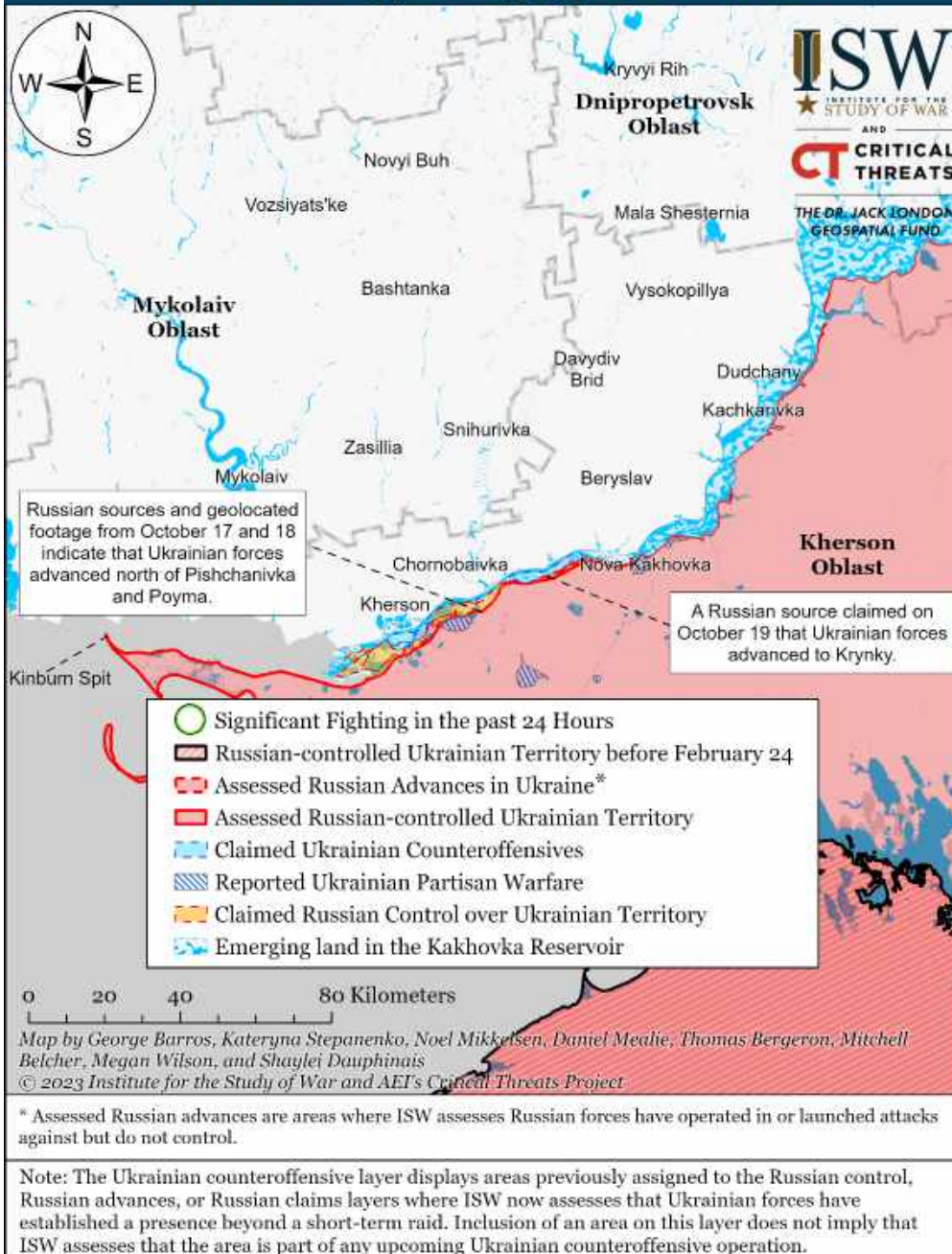
Click [here](#) to see ISW's interactive map of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

Click [here](#) to access ISW's archive of interactive time-lapse maps of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. These maps complement the static control-of-terrain map that ISW produces daily by showing a dynamic frontline. ISW will update this time-lapse map archive monthly.

Note: The data cut-off for this product was 1:30pm ET on October 18. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the October 19 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Russian sources continued to discuss larger-than-usual Ukrainian ground operations on the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast on October 19, and Ukrainian forces likely maintain a limited presence in some east bank areas near the Dnipro River shoreline and the Antonivsky railway bridge. The prominent Russian milblogger who initiated Russian discussion of Ukrainian assaults on the east bank on October 18 claimed on October 19 that two Ukrainian sabotage and reconnaissance groups of a Ukrainian naval infantry brigade crossed the Dnipro River, overwhelmed the Russian troops in the area, and gained a foothold in the village of Krynky (30km east of Kherson City and about 2km inland from the Dnipro River shoreline).[1] The milblogger claimed that Russian infantry counterattacked and pushed Ukrainian forces back towards the outskirts of the village but noted that Ukrainian troops still control some houses in Krynky and are waiting for reinforcements to arrive in the area.[2] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces used more manpower in attacks on Krynky than in previous attacks.[3] Several Russian sources, including Kherson Oblast occupation head Vladimir Saldo, claimed that Russian forces managed to push Ukrainian forces back from the Poyma-Pishchanivka-Pidstepne area (15km east of Kherson City) to the Dnipro River shoreline and to positions under the Antonivsky railway bridge, where they claim Ukrainian forces are trying to rest and regroup under constant Russian air and artillery strikes.[4] The Ukrainian General Staff also notably tacitly acknowledged Ukrainian operations on the east bank and reported on October 19 that Russian airstrikes hit Pishchanivka, implying Ukrainian forces were operating in the town.[5] While Russian sources continue to offer slightly diverging claims about the scale of the Ukrainian attacks on the east bank, ISW continues to assess that current Ukrainian actions appear to be larger than previously observed tactical raids, and available geolocated footage indicates that Ukrainian forces maintain a presence along the shoreline and near the Antonivsky railway bridge despite Russian counterattacks.[6]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of October 19, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Satellite imagery published on October 18 suggests that the Ukrainian ATACMS strike on the Luhansk City airfield likely damaged several helicopters on October 17. Ukrainian and Russian sources amplified satellite imagery showing the aftermath of the Ukrainian strike on the Luhansk City airfield.[7] A Ukrainian reserve officer analyzed the imagery and suggested that the Ukrainian strike damaged at least five Russian helicopters and may have affected other vehicles at the

airfield.[8] The officer stated that scorch marks on the airport apron (ramp) confirmed the Ukrainian strike with cluster munitions and noted that multiple helicopters remained at the Luhansk City airfield, mirroring the pattern at the Berdyansk airfield (the other location struck with ATACMS on October 17). Ukrainian military sources previously reported that the Ukrainian strikes destroyed nine helicopters, one anti-aircraft missile launcher, special equipment, ammunition depots, and runway infrastructure, although ISW cannot fully confirm these Russian losses at this time.[9]

Ukrainian officials reported on October 19 that Ukrainian forces have downed five Russian fixed wing aircraft within the past 10 days in Donetsk Oblast amid high Russian ground vehicle losses near Avdiivka.[10] Ukrainian Tavriisk Group of Forces Commander Brigadier General Oleksandr Tarnavskiy reported on October 19 that Ukrainian forces shot down five fixed-wing aircraft, including at least one Su-25 fighter jet, in Donetsk Oblast.[11] Ukrainian Tavriisk Group of Forces Spokesperson Colonel Oleksandr Shtupun stated that Russian forces primarily use attack aircraft to conduct airstrikes but that the aircraft are ineffective at range, forcing Russian aircraft to fly closer to the front line and resulting in the loss of five aircraft in 10 days.[12] Shtupun stated that there are unconfirmed reports that Ukrainian forces damaged additional Russian aircraft.[13] Shtupun reported that Russian forces also operate Su-34 and Su-35 fighters in the Tavriisk direction but that Russian forces do not fly these aircraft close to the front line out of fear of Ukrainian air defenses.[14] Russian forces notably suffered vehicle losses of likely at least 45 tanks and armored vehicles, at least one battalion tactical group's (BTG) worth, in the initial days of the offensive effort near Avdiivka.[15] Tarnavskiy's announcement indicates that Russian forces continue to pay a high materiel cost to support the ongoing Avdiivka effort, and continued materiel losses will likely continue to slow down the Russian pace of advance in the area.

Ukrainian forces reportedly advanced south of Bakhmut and in western Zaporizhia Oblast amid continued counteroffensive operations on October 19. A Ukrainian soldier stated that Ukrainian forces achieved unspecified success near Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut), Andriivka (10km southwest of Bakhmut), and Kurdyumivka (13km southwest of Bakhmut) and advanced into the Russian defensive line towards Opytne (3km south of Bakhmut).[16] Ukrainian Eastern Group of Forces Spokesperson Captain Ilya Yevlash stated on October 18 that Ukrainian forces have advanced across the railway line in unspecified areas south of Bakhmut.[17] Russian sources also claimed that Ukrainian forces advanced across the railway line in Klishchiivka on October 18.[18] ISW has not yet observed visual confirmation of Ukrainian troops operating beyond the rail line east of Klishchiivka. The Ukrainian General Staff and other Ukrainian military sources reported that Ukrainian forces were successful south of Robotyne and southwest of Verbove (10km east of Robotyne).[19] Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets stated that Ukrainian forces pushed Russian forces back from positions near Verbove and advanced between 1.5-1.6km into Russian defensive lines in an unspecified part of the Robotyne front.[20]

Russian forces conducted a series of missile and drone strikes against Ukraine on the night of October 18 to 19. The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Russian forces launched five Iskander-M ballistic missiles, one S-300 missile, one Kh-59 cruise missile, another unidentified missile, and nine Shahed-131/136 drones at Ukraine.[21] The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Ukrainian forces shot down the Kh-59 missile and three drones.[22]

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov met with North Korean Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui in Pyongyang, North Korea on October 19, likely part of an ongoing Russian

effort to procure additional munitions from North Korea. Lavrov stated that Russian-North Korean relations have reached a “qualitatively new strategic level.”[23] Lavrov also stated that a Russian-North Korean intergovernmental commission will meet at an unspecified date in November to discuss mining/geological, energy, trade, economic, and technical cooperation.[24] ISW previously assessed that Russia may be interested in some forms of technological and defense cooperation with North Korea in exchange for the provision of artillery ammunition as long as such cooperation does not trigger secondary sanctions against Russia.[25]

A Russian milblogger observed that Ukrainian forces are successfully and asymmetrically attriting Russian reserves in ongoing offensive operations. In a series of long Telegram posts on October 19, the milblogger noted that Ukrainian forces are purposefully conducting offensive operations to attrit limited Russian reserves while preserving their own reserves to the utmost possible extent.[26] The milblogger claimed that the state of Russian infantry is at its lowest point in the war and emphasized that Ukrainian forces are exploiting the fact that Ukraine knows Russia will not conduct a general mobilization.[27] These observations are largely consistent with ISW’s assessment that Russian forces largely lack high-quality reserves and are struggling to generate, train, and soundly deploy reserves to effectively plug holes in the frontline and pursue offensive operations, instead relying largely on tactical-level lateral redeployments.[28] ISW has also previously observed that Ukrainian forces have engaged Russian troops in an asymmetrical attrition gradient along many critical sectors of the frontline.[29] Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) analyst Dr Jack Watling similarly observed on October 19 that as long as Ukrainian forces can continue inflicting a high casualty rate on Russian forces, “it becomes possible to suppress Russia’s ability to train sufficient new troops to the standard needed to effectively conduct offensive action.”[30]

The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) reportedly continues efforts to push remnants of the Wagner Group out of Syria. A Kremlin-affiliated Russian milblogger amplified claims on October 19 that the Russian MoD and Syrian forces allegedly acting under the Russian MoD’s influence are trying to push Wagner forces stationed near Palmyra out of Syria.[31] A Russian insider source claiming to have connections to the Wagner Group claimed that ISIS and other extremist groups will likely take advantage of Wagner’s withdrawal from Syria, further destabilizing the region.[32]

A prominent Russian information space voice targeted two members of Russian President Vladimir Putin’s inner circle with accusations of corruption. Russian lawyer Kirill Kachur, whom the Russian Investigative Committee charged in absentia for embezzlement and bribery in 2022 and who claims to have insider knowledge about internal Kremlin politics, accused Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) Head Sergei Naryshkin and Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin of causing over one trillion rubles (\$10.3 billion) of damage to the Russian economy through bribes and tax breaks from Russian businessmen since Mishustin’s appointment as head of the Russian Federal Tax Service in 2010.[33] Kachur also criticized businessman Alexander Udodov, Federal Security Service (FSB) General Ivan Tkachev, and FSB Colonel Sergei Natarov for enabling and protecting Mishustin.[34] Kachur’s complaint notably focuses on the current poor state of the Russian economy and the negative impact of such a high monetary loss amid a broader Russian focus on the federal budget.[35] Kachur claimed that the Russian Investigative Committee and FSB are currently investigating Mishustin and Naryshkin; ISW has observed no corroboration of Kachur’s claims from other Russian sources, and Russian officials have not commented on these claims.[36]

Key Takeaways:

- **Russian sources continued to discuss larger-than-usual Ukrainian ground operations on the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast on October 19, and Ukrainian forces likely maintain a limited presence in some east bank areas near the Dnipro River shoreline and the Antonivsky railway bridge.**
- **Satellite imagery published on October 18 suggests that the Ukrainian ATACMS strike on the Luhansk City airfield likely damaged several helicopters on October 17.**
- **Ukrainian officials reported on October 19 that Ukrainian forces have downed five Russian fixed wing aircraft within the past 10 days in Donetsk Oblast amid high Russian ground vehicle losses near Avdiivka.**
- **Ukrainian forces reportedly advanced south of Bakhmut and in western Zaporizhia Oblast amid continued counteroffensive operations on October 19.**
- **Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov met with North Korean Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui in Pyongyang, North Korea on October 19, likely part of an ongoing Russian effort to procure additional munitions from North Korea.**
- **A Russian milblogger observed that Ukrainian forces are successfully and asymmetrically attriting Russian reserves in ongoing offensive operations.**
- **The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) reportedly continues efforts to push remnants of the Wagner Group out of Syria.**
- **Russian forces conducted offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line, near Bakhmut, around Avdiivka, south of Donetsk City, in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area, and in western Zaporizhia Oblast and advanced in some areas.**
- **A Russian federal subject is attempting to compensate for labor shortages in its defense sector by spearheading an initiative to allow some minors to work in hazardous conditions.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of October 19, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



We do not report in detail on Russian war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We will continue to evaluate and report on the effects of these criminal activities on the Ukrainian military and the Ukrainian population and specifically on combat in Ukrainian urban areas. We utterly condemn these Russian violations of the laws of armed conflict, Geneva Conventions, and humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

- Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine (comprised of two subordinate main efforts)
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and encircle northern Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis
- Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts
- Activities in Russian-occupied areas
- Russian Information Operations and Narratives

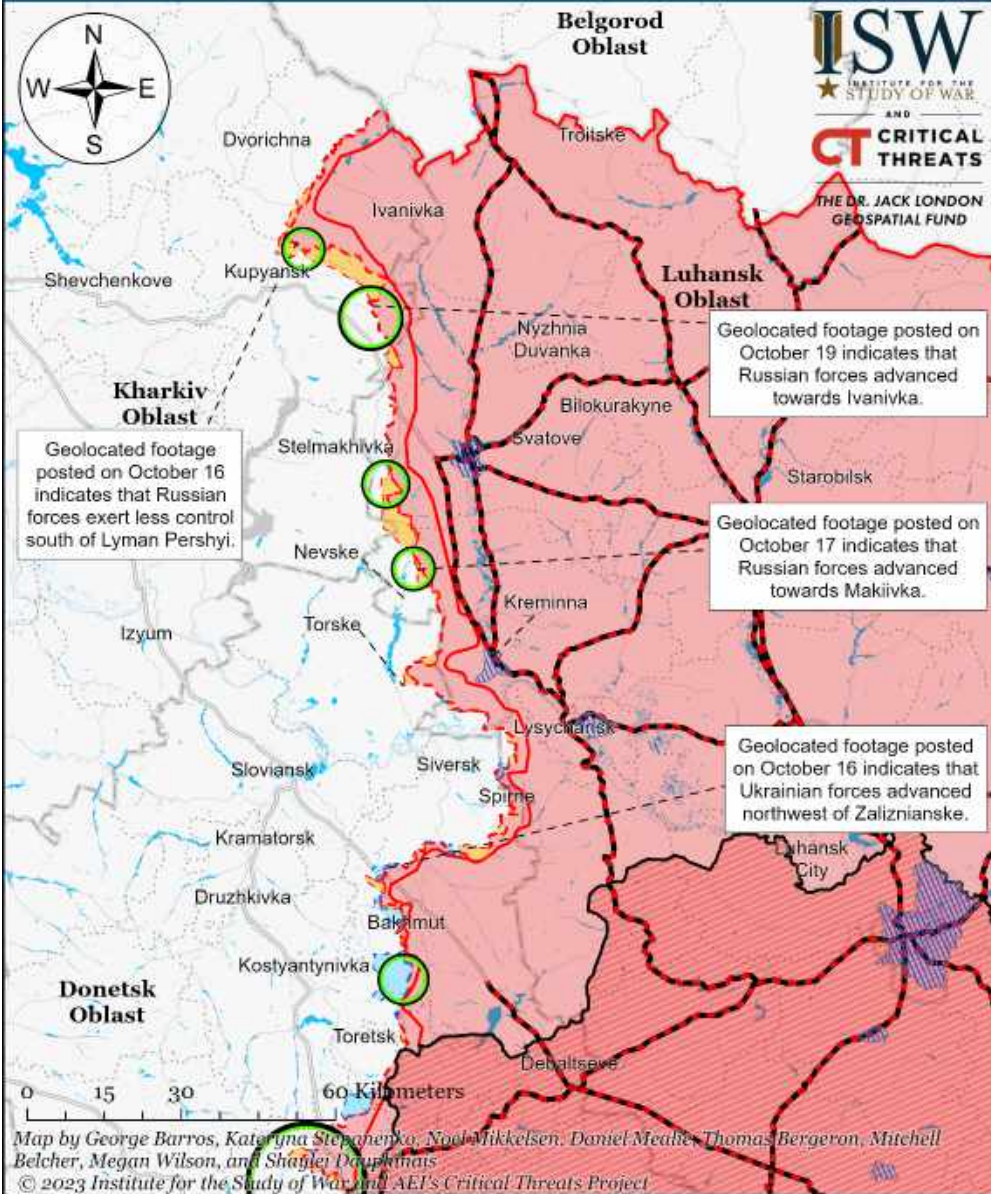
Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Luhansk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and northern Donetsk Oblast)

Russian forces continued attacks along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on October 19 and made a confirmed advance. Geolocated footage published on October 19 indicates that Russian forces advanced north of Ivanivka (19km southeast of Kupyansk).[37] A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces achieved unspecified “tactical success” near Ivanivka.[38] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces continued to advance west from Svatove towards the Oskil River and made unspecified progress near Makiivka (20km southwest of Svatove).[39] A Russian news aggregator claimed that Russian forces advanced near Makiivka on October 18.[40] The Ukrainian General Staff reported on October 19 that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks near Synivka (8km northeast of Kupyansk), Ivanivka, Kyslivka (21km southeast of Kupyansk), Nadiya (15km southwest of Svatove), and Makiivka.[41] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian and Ukrainian forces also fought near Lyman Pershyi (12km northeast of Kupyansk) and Petropavlivka (7km east of Kupyansk).[42] Ukrainian Eastern Group of Forces Spokesperson Captain Ilya Yevlash stated on October 18 that Ukrainian forces have prepared powerful fortifications in the Kupyansk-Lyman direction that Russian forces are unlikely to break through despite constant attacks. [43]

The Russian MoD claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks near Synivka and Ivanivka in Kharkiv Oblast and Novoyehorivka (16km southwest of Svatove), Makiivka, and Dibrova (7km southwest of Kreminna) in Luhansk Oblast.[44]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of October 19, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Russian Ground Lines of Communication
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare

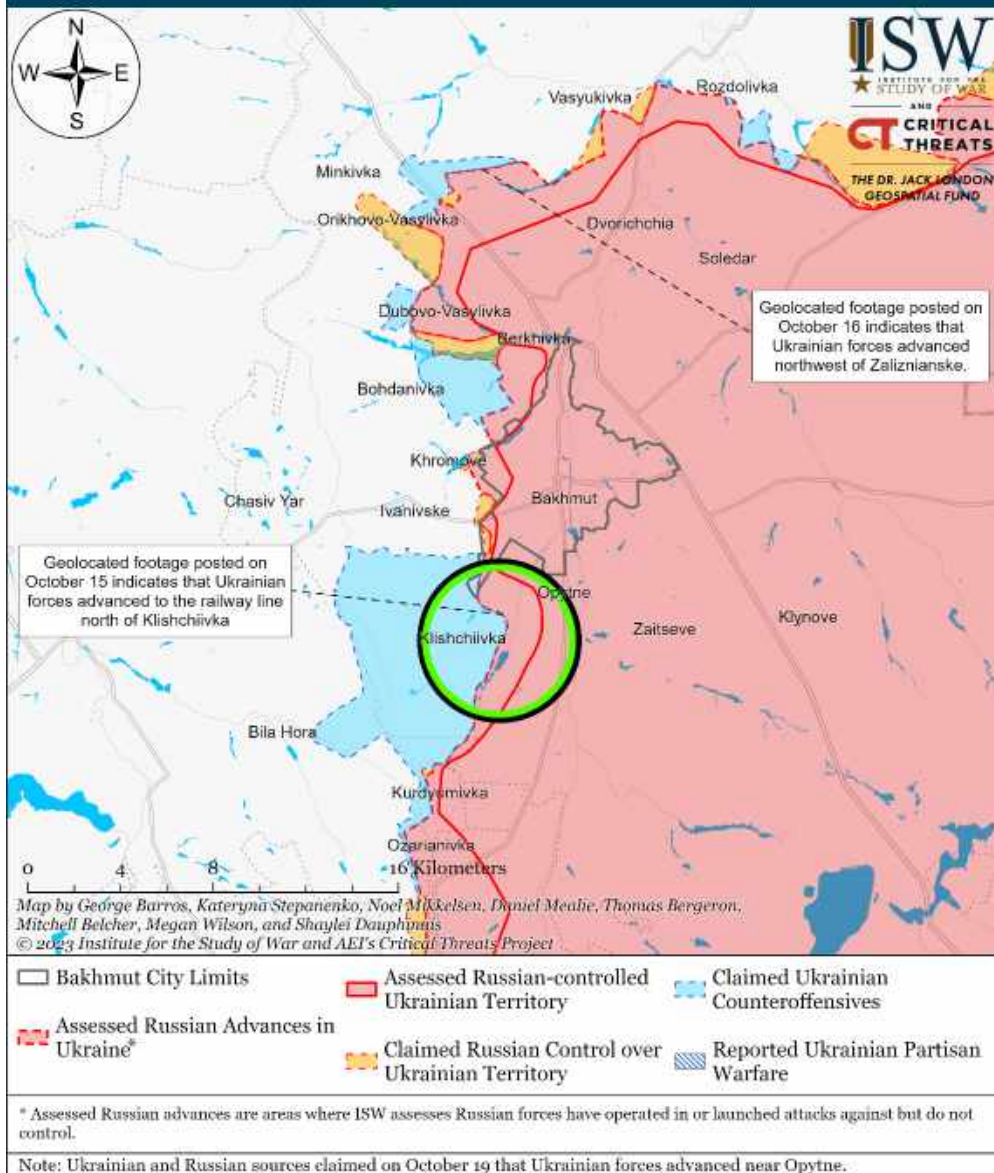
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Donetsk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)

Ukrainian forces conducted offensive operations near Bakhmut on October 19 and reportedly advanced. A Ukrainian soldier stated on October 19 that Ukrainian forces were successful near Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut), Andriivka (10km southwest of Bakhmut), and Kurdyumivka (13km southwest of Bakhmut) and advanced into the Russian defensive line toward Opytne (3km south of Bakhmut).[45] Ukrainian Eastern Group of Forces Spokesperson Captain Ilya Yevlash stated on October 18 that Ukrainian forces have advanced behind the railway line in various unspecified areas south of Bakhmut.[46] Several Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces advanced behind the railway line near Klishchiivka and in the Klishchiivka area, but a different Russian source claimed that Ukrainian forces were unable to advance past the railway line.[47] The Russian MoD claimed that Russian forces repelled a Ukrainian attack near Klishchiivka.[48] ISW has not yet observed visual confirmation of Ukrainian forces operating beyond the railway line east of Klishchiivka. A Russian milblogger claimed that fighting is also ongoing near Orikhovo-Vasylivka (10km northwest of Bakhmut).[49]

Russian forces conducted offensive operations near Bakhmut on October 19 but did not advance. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks near Klishchiivka.[50] Yevlash stated on October 18 that Russian forces unsuccessfully attempted to regain lost positions near Andriivka.[51]

Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of October 19, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

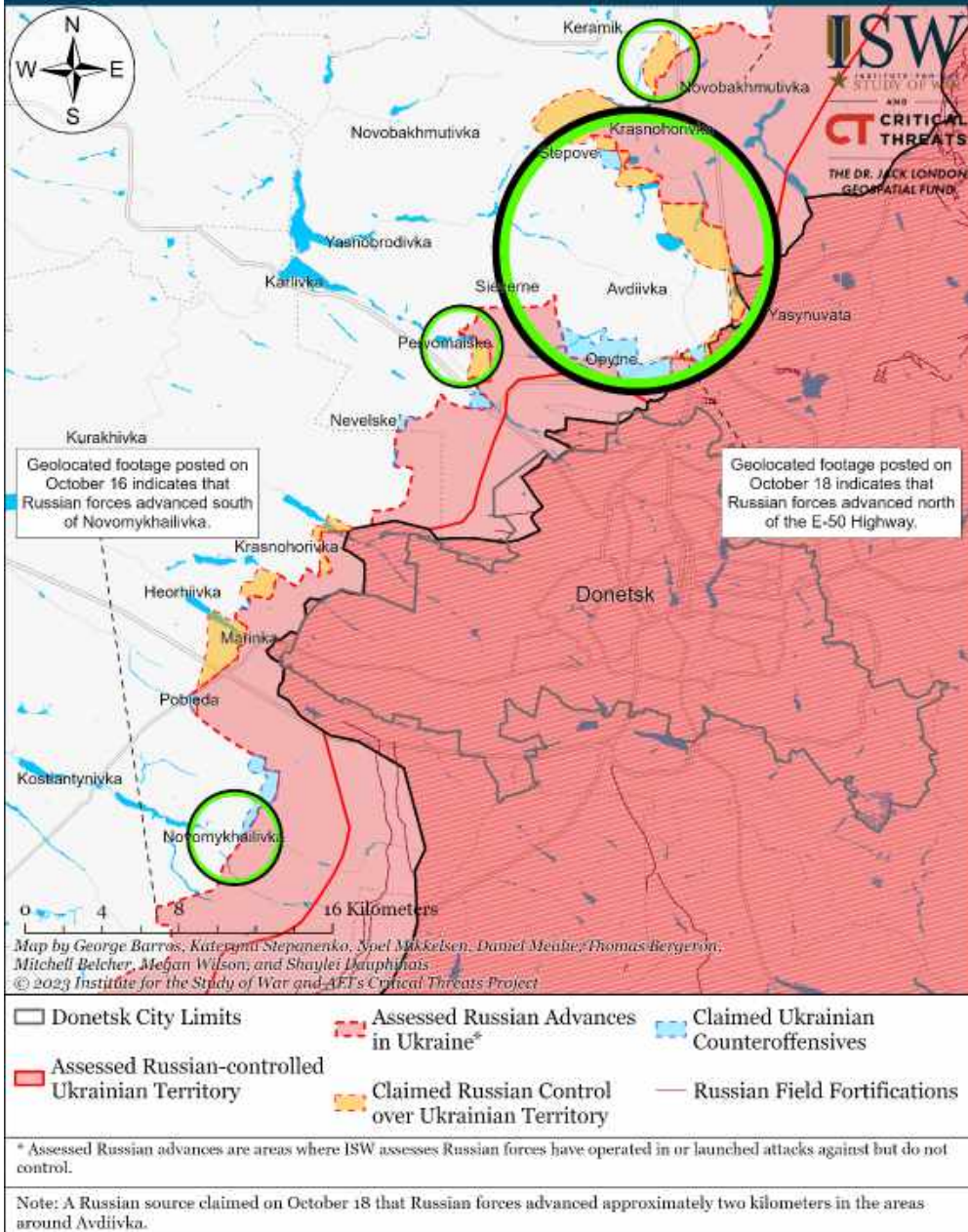


Russian forces conducted offensive operations around Avdiivka on October 19 and made a marginal confirmed advance. Geolocated footage published on October 19 indicates that elements of the Russian “Kluny” Sabotage, Assault and Reconnaissance Detachment (likely of the 1st Donetsk People’s Republic [DNR] Army Corps) made limited advances north of Spartak (4km south of Avdiivka).[52] A Russian milblogger claimed on October 18 that Russian forces have advanced about 2km in unspecified areas around Avdiivka.[53] A Russian milblogger claimed on October 18 that Russian forces achieved unspecified success near an unspecified section of the E50 highway southeast of Avdiivka and are advancing near Sieverne (5km west of Avdiivka), though ISW has not observed visual evidence supporting this claim.[54] Ukrainian military observer Yuriy Butusov stated on October 18 that Russian forces captured a position north of Avdiivka and an unspecified part of

Vodyane (7km southwest of Avdiivka), though ISW has not observed evidence to support these claims nor have official Ukrainian sources confirmed them.[55] Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets stated on October 19 that elements of the Russian 1st Motorized Rifle Brigade (1st DNR Army Corps) advanced several hundred meters in the “Tsarska Okhota” restaurant area and that elements of the Russian 9th Motorized Rifle Brigade (1st DNR Army Corps) advanced several hundred meters in the Vodyane-Netaylove direction (7-14km southwest of Avdiivka).[56] Mashovets also stated that Russian forces advanced several hundred meters in the Vodyane-Tonenke area (5-7km southwest of Avdiivka).[57] ISW has not observed visual evidence of Mashovets’ latter two claims nor have Ukrainian official sources confirmed them. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks near Avdiivka, Novokalynove (11km northwest of Avdiivka), Stepove (7km northwest of Avdiivka), Sieverne, and Pervomaiske (11km southwest of Avdiivka).[58] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces attacked in unspecified areas south, west, and northwest of Avdiivka.[59] Mashovets reported that elements of the 114th Motorized Rifle Brigade (1st DNR Army Corps) and 277th Infantry Battalion (likely of the 1st DNR Army Corps) attacked near Stepove and that elements of the Russian 1454th Motorized Rifle Regiment (Russian Territorial Defense) and 21st Motorized Rifle Brigade (2nd Combined Arms Army, Central Military District) attack near Kamyanka (5km northeast of Avdiivka).[60] Mashovets also reported that units of the Russian “Pyatnashka” and “Yugra” volunteer battalions attempted to advance to the N20 highway east of Avdiivka from positions near Kruta Balka (5km east of Avdiivka).[61]

Ukrainian forces conducted limited counterattacks near Avdiivka on October 13 and reportedly advanced. Mashovets stated that Ukrainian forces pushed Russian forces south of Sieverne and repelled Russian elements of the 114th Motorized Rifle Brigade from reaching the railway line near Stepove.[62] A milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked near Krasnohorivka (5km north of Avdiivka) but did not state the outcome of the attack.[63]

Assessed Control of Terrain near Donetsk City as of October 19, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

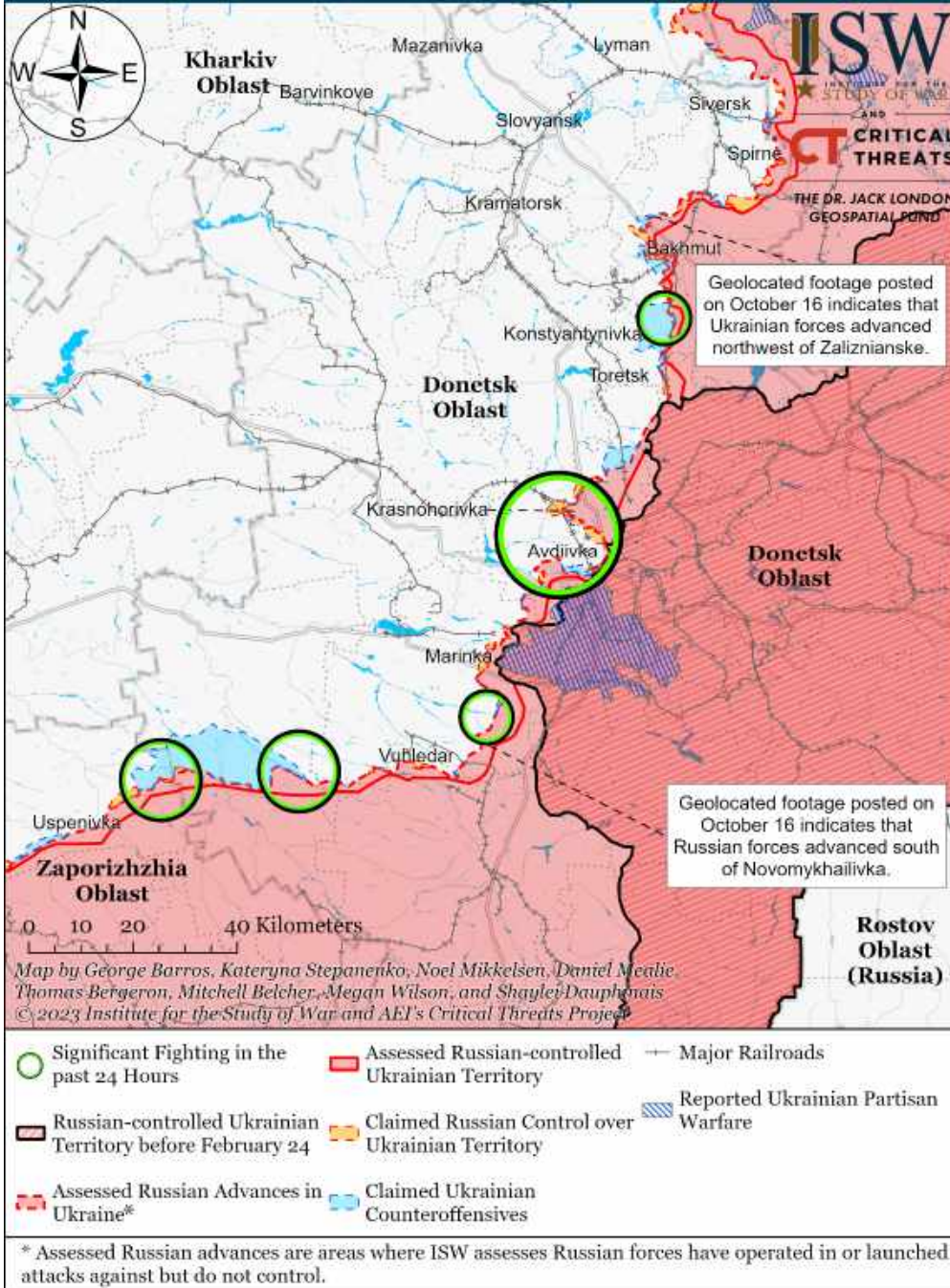


Russian force conducted offensive operations southwest of Donetsk City on October 19 and made confirmed advances. Geolocated footage published on October 18 indicates that Russian forces advanced northeast of Novomykhailivka (10km southwest of Donetsk City).[64] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks near Marinka and Novomykhailivka.[65] The Ukrainian military observer reported that elements of the Russian 5th Motorized Rifle Brigade (1st DNR Army Corps) and 103rd Motorized Rifle Regiment (150th

Motorized Rifle Division, 8th Combined Arms Army, Southern Military District) unsuccessfully attacked near Marinka.[66]

Ukrainian forces did not conduct any claimed or confirmed ground attacks southwest of Donetsk City on October 19.

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of October 19, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

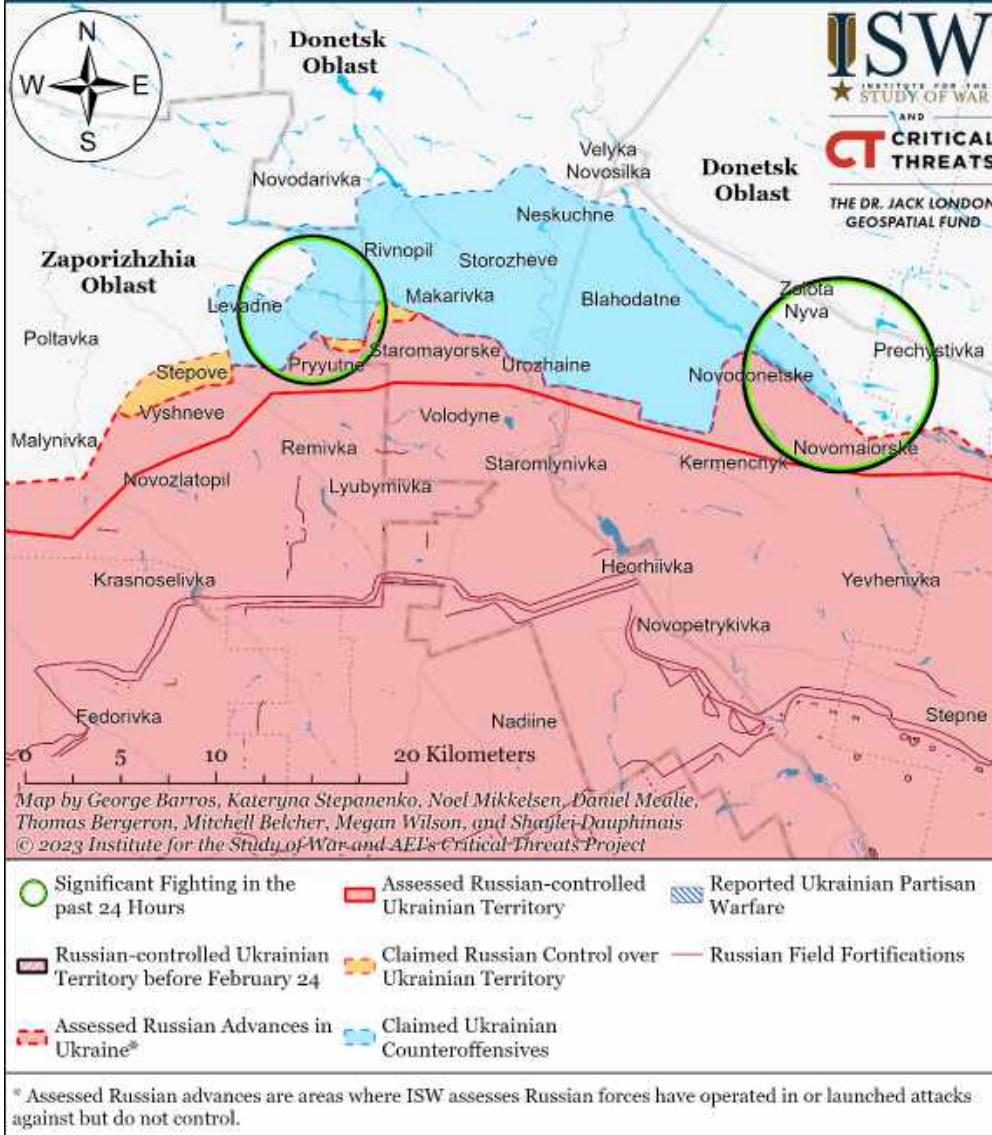


Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions and secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes)

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted an unsuccessful ground attack in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on October 19. The Russian MoD and another Russian source claimed that Russian forces repelled two small Ukrainian sabotage and reconnaissance groups in the forest area near Pryyutne (15km southwest of Velyka Novosilka).[67] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces are defending along the Staromayorske-Urozhaine line (about 10km south of Velyka Novosilka) but are not conducting active attacks to gain new positions in the area due to heavy Russian air and artillery strikes.[68]

Russian forces conducted limited counterattacks in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on October 19 but did not make any claimed or confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks near Zolota Nyva and Novomayorske (12km and 19km southeast of Velyka Novosilka, respectively).[69] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces have set sufficient conditions to resume successful attacks on this sector of the front.[70] Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets noted that the Russian Eastern Grouping of Forces has transitioned to more active offensive operations in the Berdyansk (Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area) direction and reported that advanced units of the Russian 40th Naval Infantry Brigade (Pacific Fleet) attempted to cross the T0509 Velyka Novosilka-Vuhledar road towards Novoukraiinka from positions in Shevchenko (18km southwest of Velyka Novosilka).[71] Mashovets also stated that elements of the 37th Motorized Rifle Brigade (36th Combined Arms Army, Eastern Military District) unsuccessfully attacked from Novodonetske (12km southeast of Velyka Novosilka) towards Zolota Nyva.[72]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around the Vremivka Salient as of October 19, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast on October 19 and reportedly advanced. The Ukrainian General Staff and other Ukrainian military sources reported that Ukrainian forces were successful south of Robotyne and southwest of Verbove (10km east of Robotyne) and advanced up to 400m in an unspecified part of the western Zaporizhzhia front.[73] Mashovets stated that Ukrainian forces pushed Russian forces back from positions near Verbove and advanced between 1.5-1.6km into Russian defensive lines in an unspecified part of the Robotyne front.[74] The Russian MoD claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted two unsuccessful attacks near Verbove.[75] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks near Novoprokopivka (2km south of Robotyne) and maintained pressure along the entire Robotyne-Verbove line.[76] One Russian milblogger claimed that the situation northwest of Robotyne

on the Zherebryanky-Pyatykhatky line remains largely unchanged but reported that Ukrainian forces are trying to shift the frontline eastward towards Mali Shcherbaky (about 22km northwest of Robotyne).[77]



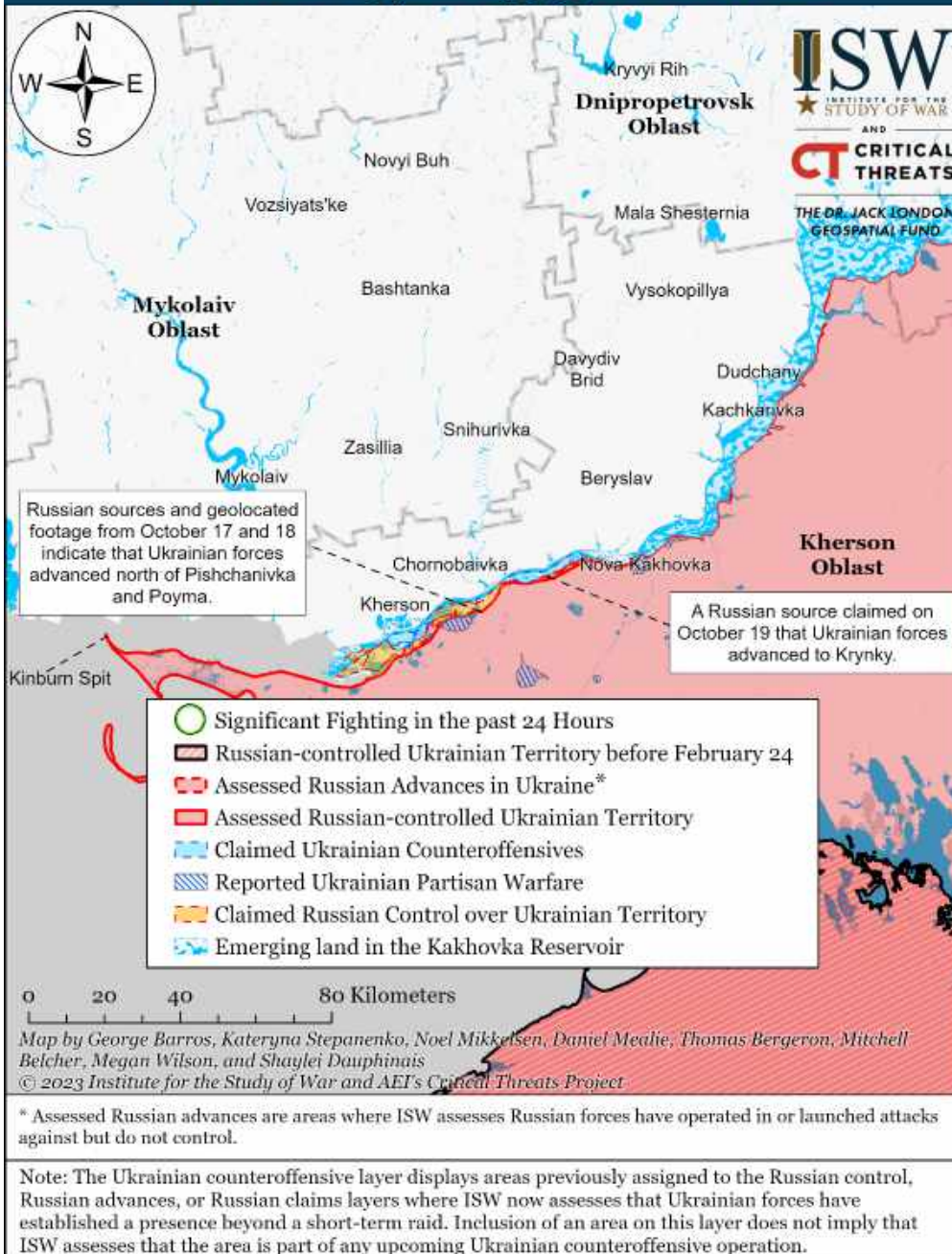
Russian forces continued counterattacks in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast on October 19 and made a marginal confirmed advance. Geolocated footage posted on October 19 shows a Russian tank and BMD-4 infantry fighting vehicle operating about 4km east of Novopokrovka, indicating that Russian forces hold positions in the area.[78] Russian milbloggers claimed that the footage suggests that Russian forces successfully counterattacked near Novopokrovka.[79] Russian milbloggers additionally claimed that Russian forces attacked west of Robotyne, towards Novodanylivka, and near Verbove.[80] Mashovets noted that the Russian command is constantly deploying tactical reserves

comprised of reorganized tactical groups of mobilized troops to the area to support Russian counterattacks on Ukrainian flanks in the area.[81]



See topline text for updates on Kherson Oblast.

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of October 19, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces attempted a missile strike on Russian military assets in occupied Crimea on the night of October 18. The Russian MoD claimed that Russian air defense downed two Ukrainian-modified S-200 missiles over occupied Crimea on the evening of October 18.[82] A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Ukraine launched two Hrim-2 missiles at Crimea, one of which fell near the Black Sea Fleet Repair Base in Inkerman, southwest Crimea, and the other of which fell near the northwestern part of Sevastopol.[83] The milblogger also claimed that

Russian air defenses shot down a modified S-200 missile near Kara-Koba (just northeast of Sevastopol).[84]

The Russian MoD claimed that Russian aircraft intercepted NATO and British aircraft over the Black Sea. Russian media reported on October 19 that two Russian Su-27 fighter jets scrambled in response to the presence of an RC-135 radio-technical reconnaissance and electronic warfare aircraft and 2 British Typhoon multirole fighters over the Black Sea.[85]

Russia likely deployed naval-trained dolphins to northwestern Crimea. Open-source intelligence analyst HI Sutton reported on October 18 that Russia has moved pens containing trained dolphins to Novoozerne, northwestern Crimea, as of August 2023.[86] Sutton noted that the Russian Navy uses trained dolphins to defend critical naval bases against special forces divers and suggested that their deployment to northwestern Crimea indicates continued concern over the potential for Ukrainian raids on the western coast of Crimea.[87]

Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts (Russian objective: Expand combat power without conducting general mobilization)

A Russian federal subject (region) is attempting to compensate for labor shortages in its defense sector by spearheading an initiative to allow some minors to work in hazardous conditions.[88] The Republic of Tatarstan is preparing a proposal to amend its labor code to allow Russian minors aged 16-18 to work in hazardous conditions under a fixed-term contract due to personnel shortages.[89] The Russian State Duma Committee on Labor, Social Policy, and Veterans' Affairs Yaroslav Nilov expressed support for allowing some teenagers to work at defense enterprises and noted labor shortages across the industry, including at aircraft manufacturing plants and at small-arms manufacturer Kalashnikov Concern.[90] Russian newswire *Kommersant* noted that the proposal calls on the Russian federal government to resolve contradictions in federal child labor policies, and such a resolution would likely allow other federal subjects to pass similar legislation to the Tatarstan proposal.[91] Tatarstan also notably houses a Shahed drone production plant, and there have been reports that college students are working at the plant. This law may allow Russian authorities to exploit child labor for the production of Shahed drones. [92]

The Russian MoD-affiliated “Redut” private military company (PMC) is reportedly comprised of Russian veterans of Afghanistan and former Spetsnaz personnel. A prominent Russian milblogger claimed to have spoken to Redut PMC personnel who reportedly served in Afghanistan or as Spetsnaz and that these fighters claimed that Redut largely operates without official military ranks and personnel instead only hold positions.[93] The personnel claimed that there are no significant pay disparities between roles; the least experienced fighters reportedly receive salaries of 230,000 rubles (\$2,369) while a deputy brigade commander receives a salary of 260,000 rubles (\$2,678).[94] The milblogger claimed that Redut PMC also has its own subordinate “Storm-Z” company of penal recruits.[95]

The Russian military command likely transferred 45 mobilized Russian personnel to “Storm-Z” units as retaliation for refusing to fight following a public complaint. Ukrainian Luhansk Oblast Head Artem Lysohor reported that the Russian military command transferred 45 mobilized personnel of the Russian 12th Guards Tank Regiment (4th Guards Tank Division, 1st Guards Tank Army, Western Military District) to a “Storm-Z” unit after imprisoning them on October 7 for refusing to fight in the Kupyansk direction.[96] Lysohor stated that public outcry prompted the Russian military command

to release the personnel after a week of imprisonment. ISW recently reported on October 14 about the wives of these personnel complaining about their imprisonment after the unit suffered 300 casualties during a failed assault in the Kupyansk direction.[97]

Activities in Russian-occupied areas (Russian objective: Consolidate administrative control of annexed areas; forcibly integrate Ukrainian citizens into Russian sociocultural, economic, military, and governance systems)

The Belarusian government announced on October 19 that Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko signed a decree granting Belarusian citizenship to 262 Ukrainian civilians, including 16 children.[98] The Belarusian government stated that Belarus has provided citizenship to 6,814 Ukrainian citizens since August 9, 2021.[99] ISW has previously reported on Belarus' and Lukashenko's personal culpability in forcibly deporting Ukrainian civilians to Belarus during the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine.[100]

Russian Information Operations and Narratives

Russian state media is falsely attempting to portray Ukraine as oppressing religious liberties to publicly discredit Ukraine. Russian state media outlets are reporting on the Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada's October 19 vote to ban the Russian state-affiliated religious organizations and claimed that the vote is part of the "persecution" of the Russian state-affiliated Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarchate (UOC MP).[101] As ISW has previously reported, the UOC MP is not an independent religious organization but an extension of the Russian state that has provided military support for Russia's initial invasion of Ukraine in 2014 and the full-scale invasion in 2022.[102] The Kremlin has notably sought to portray itself as religiously tolerant while actively persecuting Ukrainian Orthodox Christians and religious minorities in occupied Ukraine.[103]

Significant activity in Belarus (Russian efforts to increase its military presence in Belarus and further integrate Belarus into Russian-favorable frameworks and Wagner Group activity in Belarus)

A Russian official claimed that perceived Western aggression prompted recent decisions about Russia's nuclear arsenal, including the deployment of tactical nuclear weapons to Belarus. Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Department of Non-Proliferation and Arms Control Director Vladimir Ermakov stated on October 16 that Russia's deployment of tactical nuclear weapons to Belarus and withdrawal of the ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty will level out the "imbalance in the strategic sphere" that the US created.[104] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russia's transfer of tactical nuclear weapons to Belarus does not violate the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaties because Russian forces still control the nuclear warheads in Belarus.[105] ISW has previously assessed that the Kremlin uses nuclear rhetoric in an attempt to coerce the United States and its allies to pressure Ukraine to negotiate and that Russian nuclear weapon use in Ukraine remains highly unlikely.[106]

Belarusian maneuver elements conducted exercises on October 18 and 19. The Belarusian Ministry of Defense (MoD) posted photos showing elements of the Belarusian 19th Separate Guards Mechanized Brigade and 120th Separate Guards Mechanized Brigades participating in combat readiness exercises in Belarus.[107] The Belarusian MoD claimed that Belarusian Security Council State Secretary

Lieutenant General Alexander Volfovich and North-Western Operational Command Commander Major General Alexander Naumenko observed some of the exercises.[108]

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko dismissed the Belarusian ambassadors to Ukraine and Estonia from their posts on October 19.[109]

Note: ISW does not receive any classified material from any source, uses only publicly available information, and draws extensively on Russian, Ukrainian, and Western reporting and social media as well as commercially available satellite imagery and other geospatial data as the basis for these reports. References to all sources used are provided in the endnotes of each update.

POWERED BY:



BABELSTREET

[1] <https://t.me/rybar/53412>

[2] <https://t.me/rybar/53412>

[3] https://t.me/dva_majors/27691 ; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4134>

[4] https://t.me/boris_rozhin/101360 ; <https://t.me/milchronicles/2756>; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4131>; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4115>; https://t.me/dva_majors/27658; https://t.me/dva_majors/27653; https://t.me/dva_majors/27649 ; <https://t.me/HersonVestnik/21738> ; <https://t.me/NeoficialniyBeZsonoV/30154>; https://t.me/SALDO_VGA/1348

[5] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02AeBAwZn2Xmt1rd6fKVMCu6Vafis9Rs b3ncTBgZ9kFXqMo9R38Aw1MSwKPSADX91El>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0a4CqaxogEzqcU5uQgWcyW6rBL72uhbz6ThYTsCzn9cXGWquVdNRRcyh4NJpk5ucCl>

[6] <https://understandingwar.org/backgrounders/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-18-2023>; <https://twitter.com/Danspiun/status/1714711911801983248>; <https://t.me/rybar/53351>; <https://t.me/RSaponkov/6173>; https://t.me/generalstaff_ua/9346

[7] https://twitter.com/Tatarigami_UA/status/1714797845457350817 ; <https://t.me/cxemu/3703> ; <https://t.me/milinfolive/108950>

[8] https://twitter.com/Tatarigami_UA/status/1714797845457350817; https://twitter.com/Tatarigami_UA/status/1714797847852273992 ; https://twitter.com/Tatarigami_UA/status/1714797850100478296; https://twitter.com/Tatarigami_UA/status/1714797852088500646; https://twitter.com/Tatarigami_UA/status/1714797854923821540; https://twitter.com/Tatarigami_UA/status/1714797857310433491; https://twitter.com/Tatarigami_UA/status/1714797858635837733; https://twitter.com/Tatarigami_UA/status/1714797859902550070

[9] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar101723>; <https://twitter.com/Tatarigami-UA/status/1714650441982562773>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-18-2023>

[10] <https://www.facebook.com/PresscentrTavria/posts/pfbido7aiBMTERN8c93mYeyDfMfMDHqr4sRGaMZGngDmJtHpZc4NFqQZeRDjL1CBAAgA34l>; <https://t.me/otarnavskiy/288>; <https://t.me/otarnavskiy/287>; <https://armyinform.com.ua/2023/10/19/zbyto-vzhe-pyatyj-za-10-dniv-vorozhyj-shturmovyk-su-25/>

[11] <https://t.me/otarnavskiy/288>; <https://t.me/otarnavskiy/287>

[12] <https://armyinform.com.ua/2023/10/19/zbyto-vzhe-pyatyj-za-10-dniv-vorozhyj-shturmovyk-su-25/>

[13] <https://armyinform.com.ua/2023/10/19/zbyto-vzhe-pyatyj-za-10-dniv-vorozhyj-shturmovyk-su-25/>

[14] <https://armyinform.com.ua/2023/10/19/zbyto-vzhe-pyatyj-za-10-dniv-vorozhyj-shturmovyk-su-25/>

[15] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-12-2023>

[16] https://susplne.com/media/597265-minoboroni-vzalo-na-ozbroenna-novi-modifikacii-tankiv-leopard-zsu-prosuvausta-pid-robotinim-603-den-vijni-onlajn/?anchor=live_1697697607&utm_source=copylink&utm_medium=ps

[17] <https://armyinform.com.ua/2023/10/18/na-bahmutskom-napryamku-za-mynulu-dobu-likvidovano-ponad-sotnyu-okupantiv-illya-yevlash/>

[18] <https://t.me/zvofront/1364>; <https://t.me/readovkanews/68047>

[19] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2AeBAwZn2Xmt1rd6fKVMCu6Vafis9Rsb3ncTBgZ9kFXqMo9R38Aw1MSwKPSADX91El>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoa4CqaxogEzqcU5uQgWcyW6rBL72uhbz6ThYTsCzn9cXGWquVdNRRcyh4NJpk5ucCl>; <https://t.me/otarnavskiy/287>; <https://armyinform.com.ua/2023/10/19/zbyto-vzhe-pyatyj-za-10-dniv-vorozhyj-shturmovyk-su-25/>

[20] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1323>

[21] <https://armyinform.com.ua/2023/10/19/unochi-rosarmiya-atakuvala-ukrayinu-balistychnomy-raketamy-ta-udarnomy-dronamy/>; <https://t.me/kpszsu/6513>

[22] <https://armyinform.com.ua/2023/10/19/unochi-rosarmiya-atakuvala-ukrayinu-balistychnomy-raketamy-ta-udarnomy-dronamy/>; <https://t.me/kpszsu/6513>

[23] <https://www.interfax.ru/world/926600>; <https://www.vedomosti.ru/politics/news/2023/10/19/1001428-lavrov-zayavil>

- [24] <https://eodaily dot com/ru/news/2023/10/19/lavrov-v-noyabre-budet-prinyato-reshenie-o-postavkah-energonositeley-i-tovarov-v-kndr>
- [25] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-sept-16-2023> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-8-2023>
- [26] <https://t.me/wehearfromyanina/2861>; <https://t.me/wehearfromyanina/2860>; <https://t.me/wehearfromyanina/2865>
- [27] <https://t.me/wehearfromyanina/2861>; <https://t.me/wehearfromyanina/2860>; <https://t.me/wehearfromyanina/2865>
- [28] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar092323>; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar090323>; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar090123>; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar082623>
- [29] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar072223>; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar070423>
- [30] <https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/ukraine-must-prepare-hard-winter>
- [31] <https://t.me/rybar/53406>
- [32] https://t.me/knyaz_cherkasky/1979
- [33] https://t.me/prigozhin_2023_tg/4252; https://t.me/kirill_kachur/1209
- [34] https://t.me/prigozhin_2023_tg/4252; https://t.me/kirill_kachur/1209; https://t.me/kirill_kachur/1191; https://t.me/kirill_kachur/1192
- [35] https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Oct%2016%20Russian%20Offensive%20Campaign%20Assessment%20PDF_o.pdf; https://t.me/prigozhin_2023_tg/4252; https://t.me/kirill_kachur/1209; https://t.me/kirill_kachur/1191; https://t.me/kirill_kachur/1192
- [36] https://t.me/prigozhin_2023_tg/4252; https://t.me/kirill_kachur/1209
- [37] <https://t.me/c/1308729127/3719>; <https://x.com/EjShahid/status/1715045391744291087?s=20>
- [38] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15876>
- [39] https://t.me/boris_rozhin/101342 ; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/51409>
- [40] <https://t.me/readovkanews/68047>
- [41] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid05BU6H3wmh7kqoP1GRjFAJXgGog4iDdT1urnm9JXkadKCFb7LzKpWvAUS3AJ2Fz7Xl> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02AeBAwZn2Xmt1rd6fKVMCu6Vafis9Rsb3ncTBgZ9kFXqMo9R38Aw1MSwKPSADX91El>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02AeBAwZn2Xmt1rd6fKVMCu6Vafis9Rsb3ncTBgZ9kFXqMo9R38Aw1MSwKPSADX91El>

[://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0a4CqaxogEzqcU5uQgWcyW6rBL72uhbz6ThYTsczn9cXGWquVdNRRcyh4NJpk5ucCl](https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0a4CqaxogEzqcU5uQgWcyW6rBL72uhbz6ThYTsczn9cXGWquVdNRRcyh4NJpk5ucCl)

[42] https://t.me/boris_rozhin/101342; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/51409> ; https://t.me/boris_rozhin/101360 ; <https://t.me/milchronicles/2756>

[43] <https://armyinform.com.ua/2023/10/18/na-bahmutskom-nyapryamku-za-mynulu-dobu-likvidovano-ponad-sotnyu-okupantiv-illya-yevlash/>

[44] https://t.me/mod_russia/31640

[45] https://suspilne.com/media/597265-minoboroni-vzalo-na-ozbroenna-novi-modifikacii-tankiv-leopard-zsu-prosuvausa-pid-robotinim-603-den-vijni-onlajn/?anchor=live_1697697607&utm_source=copylink&utm_medium=ps

[46] <https://armyinform.com.ua/2023/10/18/na-bahmutskom-nyapryamku-za-mynulu-dobu-likvidovano-ponad-sotnyu-okupantiv-illya-yevlash/>

[47] <https://t.me/zvofront/1364> ; <https://twitter.com/GirkinGirkin/status/1714632904456700063> ; https://t.me/boris_rozhin/101342; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/51409> ; <https://t.me/readovkanews/68047>

[48] https://t.me/mod_russia/31640 ; https://t.me/mod_russia/31641

[49] https://t.me/boris_rozhin/101342; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/51409>

[50] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid05BU6H3wmh7kqoP1GRjFAJXgGog4iDdT1urnm9JXkadKCFb7LzKpWvAUS3AJ2Fz7Xl> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02AeBAwZn2Xmt1rd6fKVMCu6Vafis9Rsb3ncTBgZ9kFXqMo9R38Aw1MSwKPSADX91El>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0a4CqaxogEzqcU5uQgWcyW6rBL72uhbz6ThYTsczn9cXGWquVdNRRcyh4NJpk5ucCl>

[51] <https://armyinform.com.ua/2023/10/18/na-bahmutskom-nyapryamku-za-mynulu-dobu-likvidovano-ponad-sotnyu-okupantiv-illya-yevlash/>

[52] https://t.me/nm_dnr/11145;
<https://x.com/VigorousFalcon/status/1714972883758223617?s=20>
; <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/55211> ; <https://t.me/rsotmdivision/11312>

[53] <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/55183>

[54] <https://t.me/rybar/53390> ; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4132>

[55] <https://www.facebook.com/butusov.yuriy/posts/pfbid0VAuxbF2J3tXQv2CTCLSQyuvdB4yxTG333RCMeToL3LezzcAH2G838UGaXhzCXzJkl>

[56] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1324>

[57] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1324>

[58] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02AeBAwZn2Xmt1rd6fKVMCu6Vafis9Rsb3ncTBgZ9kFXqMo9R38Aw1MSwKPSADX91El>;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0a4CqaxogEzqcU5uQgWcyW6rBL72uhbz6ThYTsCzn9cXGWquVdNRRcyh4NJpk5ucCl>
; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid05BU6H3wmh7kqoP1GRjFAJXgGog4iDdT1urnm9JXkadKCFb7LzKpWvAUS3AJ2Fz7Xl>

[59] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15876> ; <https://twitter.com/Bylbyleva/status/1714855834281512972> ;
https://t.me/boris_rozhin/101342; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/51409>

[60] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1324>

[61] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1324>

[62] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1324>

[63] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15876>

[64] <https://x.com/EjShahid/status/1714716297873781124?s=20>;
<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=375028014855099>; https://t.me/WarArchive_ua/6353

[65] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid05BU6H3wmh7kqoP1GRjFAJXgGog4iDdT1urnm9JXkadKCFb7LzKpWvAUS3AJ2Fz7Xl> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02AeBAwZn2Xmt1rd6fKVMCu6Vafis9Rsb3ncTBgZ9kFXqMo9R38Aw1MSwKPSADX91El>;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0a4CqaxogEzqcU5uQgWcyW6rBL72uhbz6ThYTsCzn9cXGWquVdNRRcyh4NJpk5ucCl>

[66] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1324>

[67] https://t.me/mod_russia/31639; https://t.me/voin_dv/5539

[68] <https://t.me/ChDambiev/26238>; https://t.me/boris_rozhin/101377; https://t.me/boris_rozhin/101360 ; <https://t.me/milchronicles/2756>; https://t.me/boris_rozhin/101342; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/51409>; https://t.me/voin_dv/5515; https://t.me/voin_dv/5534; https://t.me/voin_dv/5539

[69] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid05BU6H3wmh7kqoP1GRjFAJXgGog4iDdT1urnm9JXkadKCFb7LzKpWvAUS3AJ2Fz7Xl>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02AeBAwZn2Xmt1rd6fKVMCu6Vafis9Rsb3ncTBgZ9kFXqMo9R38Aw1MSwKPSADX91El>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0a4CqaxogEzqcU5uQgWcyW6rBL72uhbz6ThYTsCzn9cXGWquVdNRRcyh4NJpk5ucCl>; <https://www.facebook.com/PresscentrTavria/posts/pfbid07aiBMTERN8c93mYeyDfMfMDHqr4sRGaMZGngDmJtHpZc4NFqQZeRDjL1CBAaGA34l>

[70] https://t.me/boris_rozhin/101342; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/51409>

[71] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1323>

[72] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1323>

[73] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2AeBAwZn2Xmt1rd6fKVMCu6Vafis9Rsb3ncTBgZ9kFXqMo9R38Aw1MSwKPSADX91El>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/post/s/pfbidoa4CqaxogEzqcU5uQgWcyW6rBL72uhbz6ThYTsCzn9cXGWquVdNRRcyh4NJpk5ucCl>; <https://t.me/otarnavskiy/287>; <https://armyinform.com.ua/2023/10/19/zbyto-vzhe-pyatyj-za-10-dniv-vorozhyj-shturmovyk-su-25/>

[74] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1323>

[75] https://t.me/mod_russia/31641

[76] <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4123>; https://t.me/boris_rozhin/101342; <https://t.me/voenkorrKotenok/51409>; https://t.me/boris_rozhin/101360 ; <https://t.me/milchronicles/2756>; <https://t.me/wargonzo/15876>; <https://t.me/RVvoenkorr/55191>

[77] https://t.me/boris_rozhin/101360 ; <https://t.me/milchronicles/2756>

[78] https://x.com/99Dominik_/status/1714972202997629178?s=20; https://t.me/rusich_army/11409

[79] https://t.me/voin_dv/5537; <https://t.me/wargonzo/15876>

[80] <https://t.me/readovkanews/68047>; <https://t.me/wargonzo/15876>

[81] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1323>

[82] https://t.me/mod_russia/31616 ; https://t.me/dva_majors/27642 ; https://t.me/vdv_ZA_teplinsky/180

[83] <https://t.me/rybar/53390>

[84] <https://t.me/rybar/53390>; <https://rybar.ru/hronika-speczialnoj-voennoj-operaczii-za-18-oktyabrya-2023-goda/>

[85] <https://t.me/readovkanews/68085> ; <https://tass.com/defense/1693769>; https://t.me/mod_russia/31643

[86] <https://www.navalnews.com/naval-news/2023/10/russian-navys-trained-dolphins-moved-closer-to-fighting-in-ukraine-war/>; <https://twitter.com/CovertShores/status/1714562958280282252>; <https://www.navalnews.com/naval-news/2023/10/russian-navys-trained-dolphins-moved-closer-to-fighting-in-ukraine-war/>

[87] <https://www.navalnews.com/naval-news/2023/10/russian-navys-trained-dolphins-moved-closer-to-fighting-in-ukraine-war/>

[88] https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/6282837?from=top_main_2; <https://t.me/sotaproject/68088>

- [89] https://www.kommersant dot ru/doc/6282837?from=top_main_2;
<https://t.me/sotaproject/68088>
- [90] https://www.kommersant dot ru/doc/6282837?from=top_main_2;
<https://t.me/sotaproject/68088>
- [91] https://www.kommersant dot ru/doc/6282837?from=top_main_2;
<https://t.me/sotaproject/68088>
- [92] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-august-17-2023>
- [93] https://t.me/Sladkov_plus/8870
- [94] https://t.me/Sladkov_plus/8870
- [95] https://t.me/Sladkov_plus/8870
- [96] <https://t.me/luhanskaVTSA/14432>
- [97] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-14-2023>
- [98] https://t.me/pul_1/10276
- [99] https://t.me/pul_1/10276
- [100] <https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Oct%207%20Russian%20Offensive%20Campaign%20Assessment%20PDF.pdf>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-july-18-2023>;
<https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Aug%2021%20Russian%20Offensive%20Ca mpaign%20Assessment%20PDF.pdf>
- [101] <https://ria dot ru/20231019/upts-1903808210.html>; <https://t.me/yzheleznyak/5604>;
https://t.me/russkiy_opolchenec/38355; <https://t.me/bbcruussian/54529>
- [102] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-april-9-2023>
- [103] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-april-9-2023>
- [104] <https://ria dot ru/20231016/oruzhie-1902996528.html> ; <https://sputnik dot by/20231016/mid-rossii-yadernoe-oruzhie-v-belarusi-vyravnivaet-disbalans-1080308700.html>
- [105] <https://t.me/nevolf/28291> ; <https://t.me/NeoficialniyBeZsonoV/30157>
- [106] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar100923> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-5-2023>

[107] <https://t.me/modmilby/33021> ; <https://t.me/modmilby/33039> ; <https://t.me/modmilby/33039>

[108] <https://t.me/modmilby/33039>

[109] <https://president.gov.by/ru/events/aleksandr-lukashenko-osvobodil-ot-dolzhnostey-poslov-v-ukraine-i-estonii>

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, October 18, 2023

Angelica Evans, Nicole Wolkov, Karolina Hird, Riley Bailey, and Mason Clark

October 18, 2023, 5:45pm ET

Click [here](#) to see ISW's interactive map of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

Click [here](#) to access ISW's archive of interactive time-lapse maps of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. These maps complement the static control-of-terrain map that ISW produces daily by showing a dynamic frontline. ISW will update this time-lapse map archive monthly.

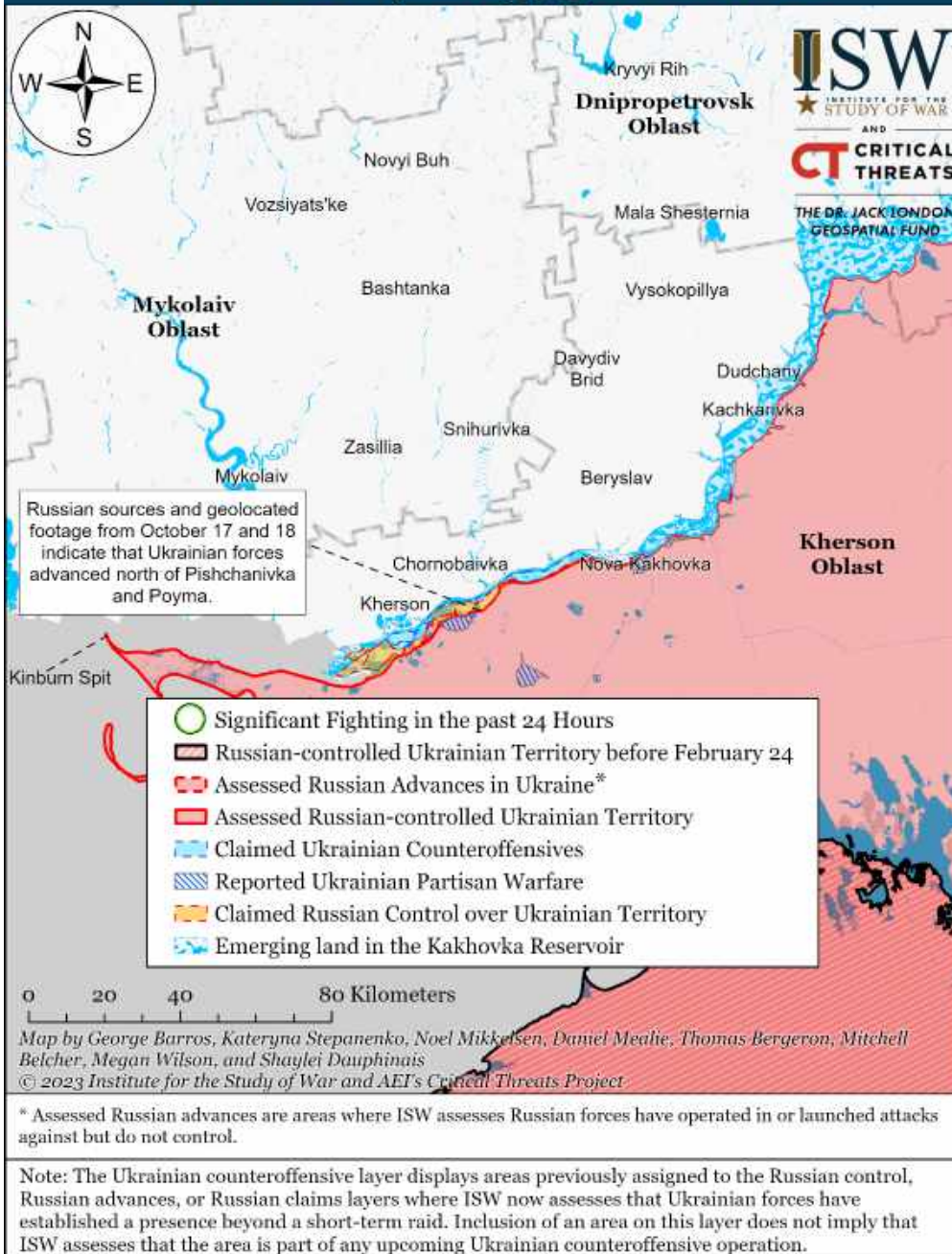
Note: The data cut-off for this product was 1pm ET on October 18. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the October 19 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment. Russian sources claimed that likely company-sized elements of two Ukrainian naval infantry brigades conducted an assault across the Dnipro River onto the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast on October 17-18. Geolocated footage published on October 18 indicates that Ukrainian forces advanced north of Pishchanivka (14km east of Kherson City and 3km from the Dnipro River) and into Poyma (11km east of Kherson City and 4km from the Dnipro River).[1] A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that two Ukrainian “assault groups” landed on the east bank of the Dnipro River and broke through initial Russian defenses, temporarily occupying all of Poyma and positions on the northern outskirts of Pishchanivka on the afternoon of October 17.[2] The milblogger later claimed that Russian forces pushed Ukrainian forces back from these positions towards the Dnipro River.[3] The milblogger claimed that a Ukrainian sabotage group is still operating in Pishchanivka as of the afternoon of October 18. The milblogger, however, suggested that Russian forces only maintain positions on the southern outskirts of the settlement. The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) also acknowledged the Ukrainian operations, claiming that Russian forces stopped four Ukrainian sabotage and reconnaissance groups near Pidstepne (16km east of Kherson City) and Poyma.[4] Another prominent Russian milblogger also claimed that Ukrainian forces occupied Poyma on the night of October 17 to 18.[5]

Russian sources expressed pronounced concern about ongoing Ukrainian activity on the east bank of Kherson Oblast and framed these activities as part of a potential larger Ukrainian operation. The majority of Russian claims about developments on the east bank are largely single-sourced to one prominent Russian milblogger who has recently heavily focused his reporting on this section of the front.[6] Russian sources characterized the reported assaults as a Ukrainian effort to expand a “bridgehead” on the east bank and the initial stages of a larger offensive operation across the Dnipro River.[7] Russian President Vladimir Putin similarly described Ukrainian activity in Kherson Oblast as the “next counteroffensive” and continued his typical rhetorical line by painting all Ukrainian offensive operations as a failure.[8] The prominent Russian milblogger who is the basis for many of these claims has expressed concern about a Ukrainian offensive across the Dnipro River on and off throughout 2023 and escalated his warnings in late September 2023. The milblogger reacted to the reported assault on the night of October 17 to 18 by accusing the Russian MoD of not taking the threat of a Ukrainian crossing seriously.[9]

Russian concerns about the ability of Russian forces to repel a potential Ukrainian offensive operation across the Dnipro River may be partially connected to the condition of the Russian grouping of forces on the left bank. The Russian command has drawn relatively more elite units from the Kherson direction to support defensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast in recent months due to likely viewing Kherson as a quiet sector, and the current force composition in the area is likely relatively less combat effective.[10] Ukrainian Southern Operational Command Spokesperson Captain First Rank Nataliya Humenyuk stated on October 17 that Russian forces were still redeploying trained units from the Kherson direction to the Zaporizhia and eastern directions.[11] The Russian military may have recently redeployed elements of the 41st Combined Arms Army (Central Military District) and the 810th Naval Infantry Brigade (Black Sea Fleet) to the Kherson direction, however, but it is unclear where in Kherson Oblast elements of the 41st Combined Arms Army are currently deployed.[12] Ukrainian counteroffensive operations reportedly previously rendered the 810th Naval Infantry Brigade combat ineffective as of September 22.[13]

ISW will not speculate on the scope and prospects of ongoing Ukrainian activity on the east bank of Kherson Oblast but does not assess that Ukrainian forces have created a bridgehead on the east bank of Kherson Oblast suitable for the further maneuver of sizeable mechanized forces at this time. However, it is noteworthy that prominent and generally reliable Russian sources are discussing Ukrainian activities on the east bank as occurring at a larger scale than previously documented tactical cross-river raids by Ukrainian forces. ISW will continue to monitor the area closely and assess control of terrain changes and Russian responses, in line with its standing policy of not forecasting Ukrainian actions.

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of October 18, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations in eastern and southern Ukraine and reportedly advanced near Bakhmut and in western Zaporizhia Oblast. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive actions south of Bakhmut and had partial success south of Robotyne.[14] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces advanced near Klishchiivka, 5km southwest of Bakhmut.[15]

Western media reported that the United States has thus far provided Ukraine with a limited number of ATACMS missiles. *The Associated Press* reported on October 17 that an unnamed US official stated that the United States provided Ukraine with “fewer than a dozen” missiles “within the last few days.”[16] *The New York Times (NYT)* reported on October 18 that two unspecified Western officials stated that the United States sent “about 20” ATACMS to Ukraine.[17] Russian President Vladimir Putin stated at a press conference in Beijing on October 18 that the ATACMS are “fundamentally incapable of changing the situation on the frontline.”[18] The Kremlin does not view the provision of ATACMS to Ukraine as an escalatory step, and the United States has not crossed a Russian “red line” by providing Ukraine with these missiles. Ukraine will need additional ATACMS to sustain the operational effects of their use on the arrayment of Russian aviation assets and logistics.[19]

Satellite imagery from October 17 suggests that the Ukrainian ATACMS strike on the Berdyansk airfield likely substantially damaged Russian aircraft and airfield infrastructure, but ISW cannot yet confirm the extent of the damage. Several open-source intelligence analysts amplified satellite imagery of the Berdyansk airfield and suggested that it shows at least seven burned-out areas where satellite imagery previously showed various Russian helicopters, and additionally noted that many helicopters have since moved.[20] A Ukrainian reserve officer stated that prior to the strike, Russian forces had Mi-28, Mi-24, and Ka-52 helicopters at the airfield, and suggested that the extent of the damage is likely more widespread than depicted in preliminary satellite imagery.[21] Ukrainian military sources previously reported that the Ukrainian strike destroyed nine helicopters, one anti-aircraft missile launcher, special equipment, ammunition depots, and runway infrastructure, but ISW cannot fully confirm these Russian losses with available imagery at this time.[22]

Russian President Vladimir Putin indicated his desire to deepen Russian-Chinese economic and political ties but did not announce any practical changes at the One Belt One Road International Forum in Beijing, China on October 18. Putin stated that close Russian and Chinese foreign policy coordination is especially necessary in “current difficult conditions” and emphasized Russian and Chinese cooperation through multilateral formats including the One Belt One Road Initiative, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU).[23] Putin claimed that economic cooperation between Russia and China is integral to strengthening Russian economic, technological, and financial sovereignty.[24] Putin notably did not emphasize Russian-Chinese security cooperation, possibly due to China’s reticence at the no-limits partnership that Russia wants to establish, as ISW has previously reported.[25] Putin also held bilateral talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping, and available Kremlin readouts of the meeting similarly stressed economic ties between Russia and China.[26] Putin’s visit to China and meeting with Xi does not appear to have resulted in any substantial change in the Chinese reticence to establish the Kremlin’s desired level of bilateral relationship or any breakthroughs in the degree of Chinese military support to Russia. Russian Finance Minister Anton Siluanov notably claimed on October 18 that almost all of Russia’s dual-use civilian drones come from China and stated that the Russian government aims to increase domestic civilian drone production to 41 percent by 2025.[27] ISW has previously observed reports that China often exports dual-use equipment to Russia, including civilian drones, which Russian forces can employ on the battlefield in Ukraine.[28]

Key Takeaways:

- **Russian sources claimed that likely company-sized elements of two Ukrainian naval infantry brigades conducted an assault across the Dnipro River onto the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast on October 17-18.**
- **Russian sources expressed pronounced concern about ongoing Ukrainian activity on the east bank of Kherson Oblast and framed these activities as part of a potential larger Ukrainian operation.**
- **ISW will not speculate on the scope and prospects of ongoing Ukrainian activity on the east bank of Kherson Oblast but does not assess that Ukrainian forces have created a bridgehead on the east bank of Kherson Oblast suitable for the further maneuver of sizeable mechanized forces at this time.**
- **Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations in eastern and southern Ukraine and reportedly advanced near Bakhmut and in western Zaporizhia Oblast.**
- **Western media reported that the US has thus far provided Ukraine with a limited number of ATACMS missiles, and the Kremlin issued a muted response to the provision of these systems**
- **Satellite imagery from October 17 suggests that the Ukrainian ATACMS strike on the Berdyansk airfield likely substantially damaged Russian aircraft and airfield infrastructure, but ISW cannot yet confirm the extent of the damage.**
- **Russian President Vladimir Putin indicated his desire to deepen Russian-Chinese economic and political ties but did not announce any practical changes at the One Belt One Road International Forum in Beijing, China on October 18.**
- **Russian forces conducted offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line, near Bakhmut, in the Avdiivka direction, southwest of Donetsk City, in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area, and in western Zaporizhia Oblast and advanced south of Avdiivka.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of October 18, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



We do not report in detail on Russian war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We will continue to evaluate and report on the effects of these criminal activities on the Ukrainian military and the Ukrainian population and specifically on combat in Ukrainian urban areas. We utterly condemn these Russian violations of the laws of armed conflict, Geneva Conventions, and humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

- Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine (comprised of two subordinate main efforts)
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and encircle northern Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis
- Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts
- Activities in Russian-occupied areas
- Russian Information Operations and Narratives

Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Luhansk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and northern Donetsk Oblast)

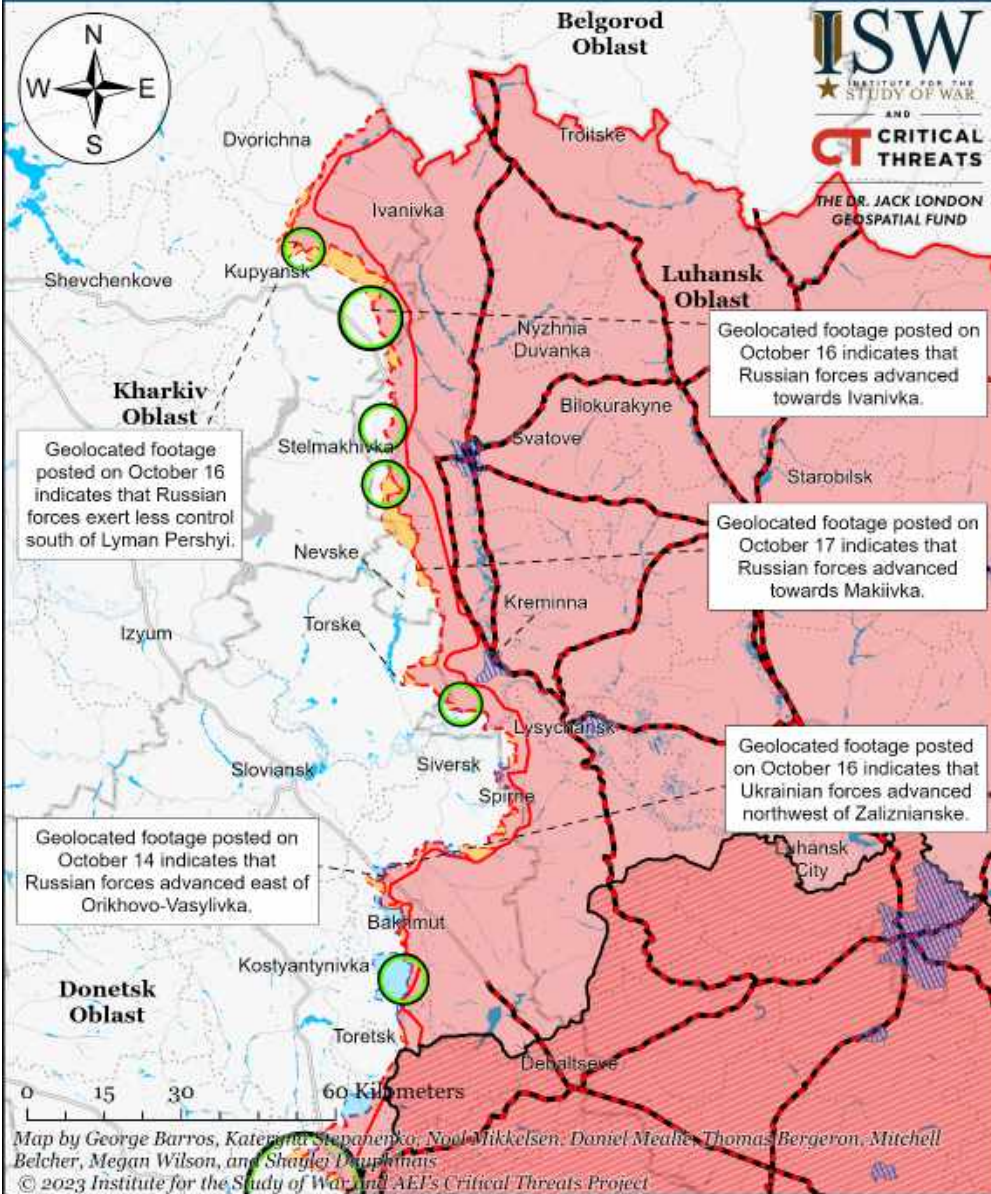
Russian forces conducted offensive operations near Kupyansk on October 18 but did not make any confirmed advances. Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced near Synkivka (8km northeast of Kupyansk) on the night of October 17, although ISW has not observed evidence of this claim.[29] The Ukrainian General Staff reported on October 18 that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Synkivka, Ivanivka (19km southeast of Kupyansk), and Kyslivka (21km southeast of Kupyansk).[30] The United Kingdom Ministry of Defense (UK MoD) reported on October 18 that Russian offensive activity in the Kupyansk-Lyman direction has significantly increased in the past two weeks and that elements of the 6th Combined Arms Army and 1st Guards Tank Army (both of the Western Military District) and the newly-created 25th Combined Arms Army have been attacking with limited success on this front, consistent with ISW’s observations.[31]

Russian sources claimed on October 18 that Ukrainian forces conducted unsuccessful counterattacks near Kupyansk. The Russian MoD claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Synkivka, Ivanivka, Pershotravneve (21km northeast of Kupyansk), and Orlyanka (22km east of Kupyansk).[32] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks near Tymkivka (18km east of Kupyansk).[33]

Russian forces conducted offensive operations along the Svatove-Kreminna line on October 18 but did not make any confirmed advances. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced in the direction of Makiivka (20km southwest of Svatove) on the night of October 17, though ISW has not observed evidence of this claim.[34] A Russian news aggregator claimed on the night of October 17 that fighting was ongoing near Torske (14km west of Kreminna).[35] The Ukrainian General Staff reported on October 18 that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks near Makiivka.[36] Footage published on October 18 purportedly shows elements of the 88th Motorized Rifle Brigade (2nd Luhansk People's Republic Army Corps) operating near Spirne (25km south of Kreminna).[37] Chechen Republic Head Ramzan Kadyrov posted footage on October 18 purportedly showing the Chechen “Amur” Group of the “Hunters” Akhmat Spetsnaz Detachment operating near the Serebryanske forest area (10km southwest of Kreminna).[38]

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks along the Svatove-Kreminna line on October 18. The Russian MoD claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Serhiivka (14km southwest of Svatove), and Dibrova (7km southwest of Kreminna).[39] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks near Nadiya (15km southwest of Svatove), Kuzmyne (3km southwest of Kreminna), and Shepylove (8km south of Kreminna).[40]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of October 18, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Map by George Barros, Katerina Stepanenko, Niall Mikkelsen, Daniel Meales, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Megan Wilson, and Shayley Dauphinais
© 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- - - Russian Ground Lines of Communication
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare

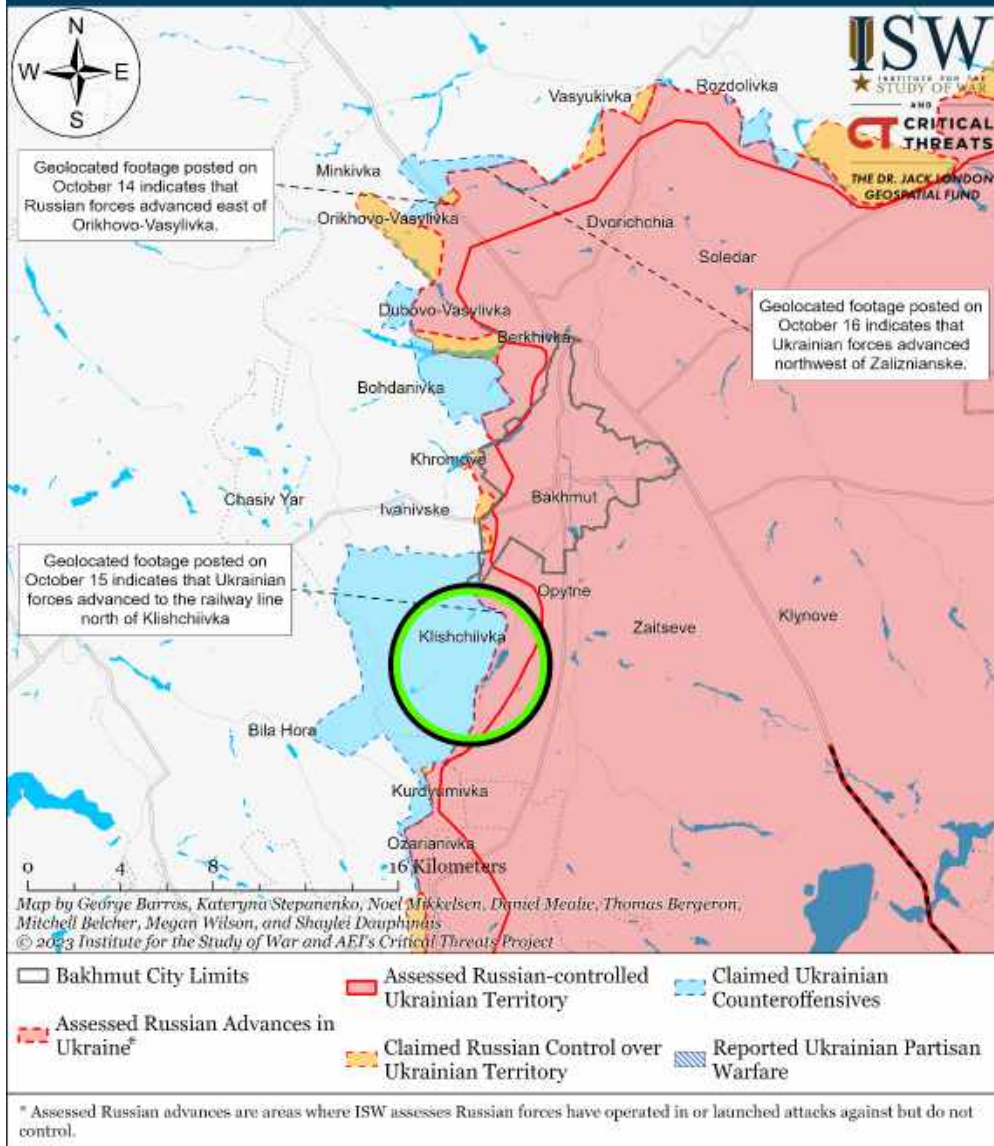
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Donetsk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)

Ukrainian forces continued ground attacks near Bakhmut on October 18 and reportedly advanced south of the city. Several Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces continued attacks toward the railway line near Klishchiivka (5km southwest of Bakhmut).[41] One milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces managed to advance northeast of Klishchiivka, and another milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces crossed the railway near a waste heap in the Klishchiivka area.[42] A Russian media aggregator seemingly refuted claims that Ukrainian forces advanced past the railway line, however, and reported that Russian forces are reliably defending the railway between Klishchiivka and Andriivka (8km southwest of Bakhmut).[43]

Russian forces continued limited and unsuccessful counterattacks near Bakhmut on October 18. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian troops repelled Russian attacks near Klishchiivka.[44] A Russian milblogger posted footage reportedly of the 83rd Air Assault (VDV) Brigade and Luhansk People’s Republic (LNR) 85th Motorized Rifle Brigade destroying Ukrainian equipment in the Bakhmut direction.[45]

Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of October 18, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



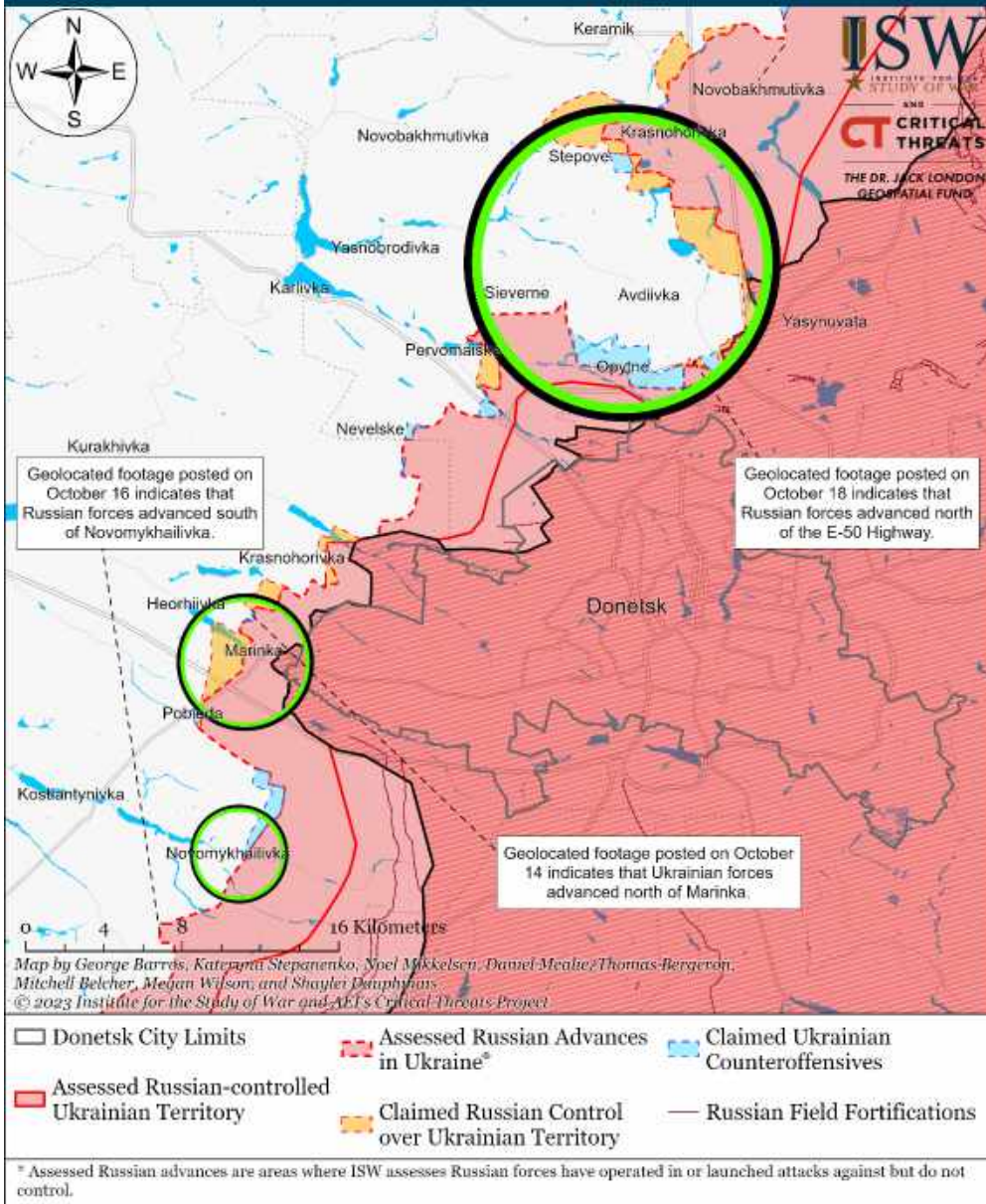
Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Avdiivka direction on October 18 and made confirmed advances. Geolocated footage from October 17 shows that Russian forces counterattacked Ukrainian positions just north of the E50 highway south of Avdiivka and advanced along the local Soborna street towards the “Tsarska Okhota” restaurant on the southern outskirts of Avdiivka.[46] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces are trying to consolidate their positions on the southern outskirts of Avdiivka before launching attacks on the “Tsarska Okhota,” which the milblogger claimed is a highly fortified position.[47] Other Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces continued attacking southwest, south, and north of Avdiivka, and one milblogger remarked that Russian forces expanded their zone of control near Pervomaiske (10km southwest of Avdiivka), Stepove (5km northwest of Avdiivka), and Sieverne (5km west of Avdiivka).[48] Avdiivka City Head

Vitaly Barabash noted that Russian forces appear to be regrouping near Avdiivka, and warned that there will likely be a new stage of fighting in coming days.[49] The Ukrainian General Staff and Ukrainian Tavriisk Group of Forces Spokesperson Oleksandr Shtupun reported that Russian forces are regrouping near Avdiivka and have not given up efforts to surround the city.[50]

Russian sources are increasingly complaining about the poor conditions facing Russian forces fighting near Avdiivka. One Russian correspondent who is purportedly fighting near Avdiivka and who notably presented an optimistic overview of the situation in the first days of the Russian assault claimed that the situation is now unchanged and remarked that the poor performance of Russian counterbattery fire is the “number one problem across the board” in this area.[51] Another Russian Telegram user amplified screenshots of messages sent by a Russian soldier near Avdiivka in which the soldier complains about foul sanitary conditions within Russian trenches and reports that Ukrainian artillery and helicopter fire are preventing Russian forces from moving out of trenches.[52]

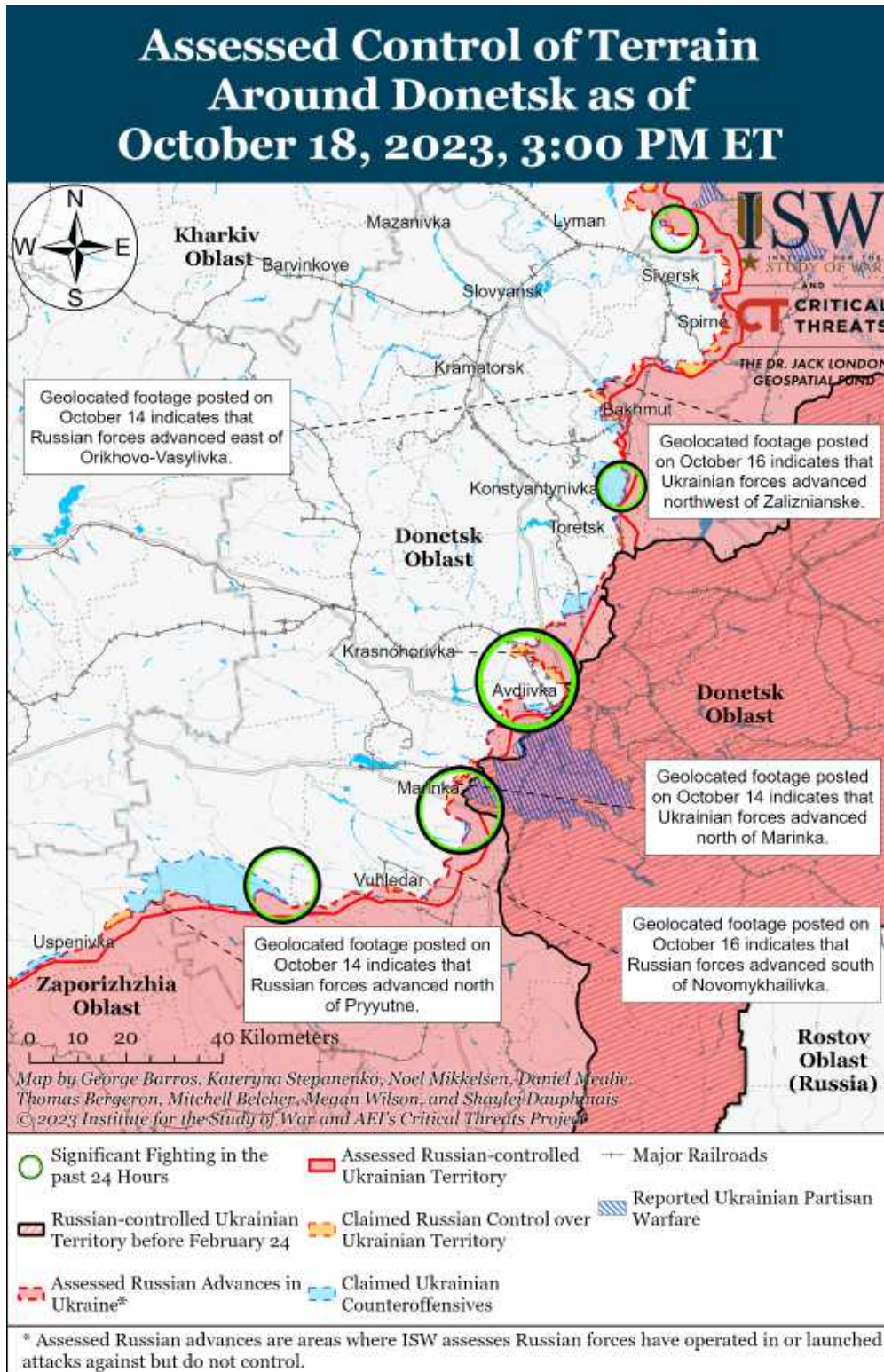
Ukrainian forces conducted limited counterattacks near Avdiivka on October 18 but did not make any confirmed gains. Geolocated footage posted on October 17 indicates that Ukrainian forces may have conducted a limited counterattack just north of the E50 highway south of Avdiivka, but subsequent footage of the same positions suggests that Russian forces subsequently counterattacked and advanced beyond the Ukrainian positions towards the southern outskirt of Avdiivka.[53] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces improved their positions near Vodyane and occupied new positions in the adjacent forest area.[54]

Assessed Control of Terrain near Donetsk City as of October 18, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Russian forces continued ground attacks southwest of Donetsk City on October 18 and did not make any confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled upwards of 20 Russian attacks near Marinka (on the southwest outskirts of Donetsk City) and Novomykhailivka (10km southwest of Donetsk City).[55] Ukrainian 79th Separate Airborne Assault Brigade Spokesperson Yaroslav Chepurnyi noted on October 18 that Russian forces have intensified artillery, drone, and guided aerial bomb strikes on Marinka in recent weeks and reported that Russian forces typically storm multiple Ukrainian positions within Marinka at the same time.[56] A Russian media aggregator claimed that Russian forces are continuing to advance within Marinka.[57]

Ukrainian forces did not conduct any claimed or confirmed ground attacks southwest of Donetsk City on October 18.



Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions and secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes)

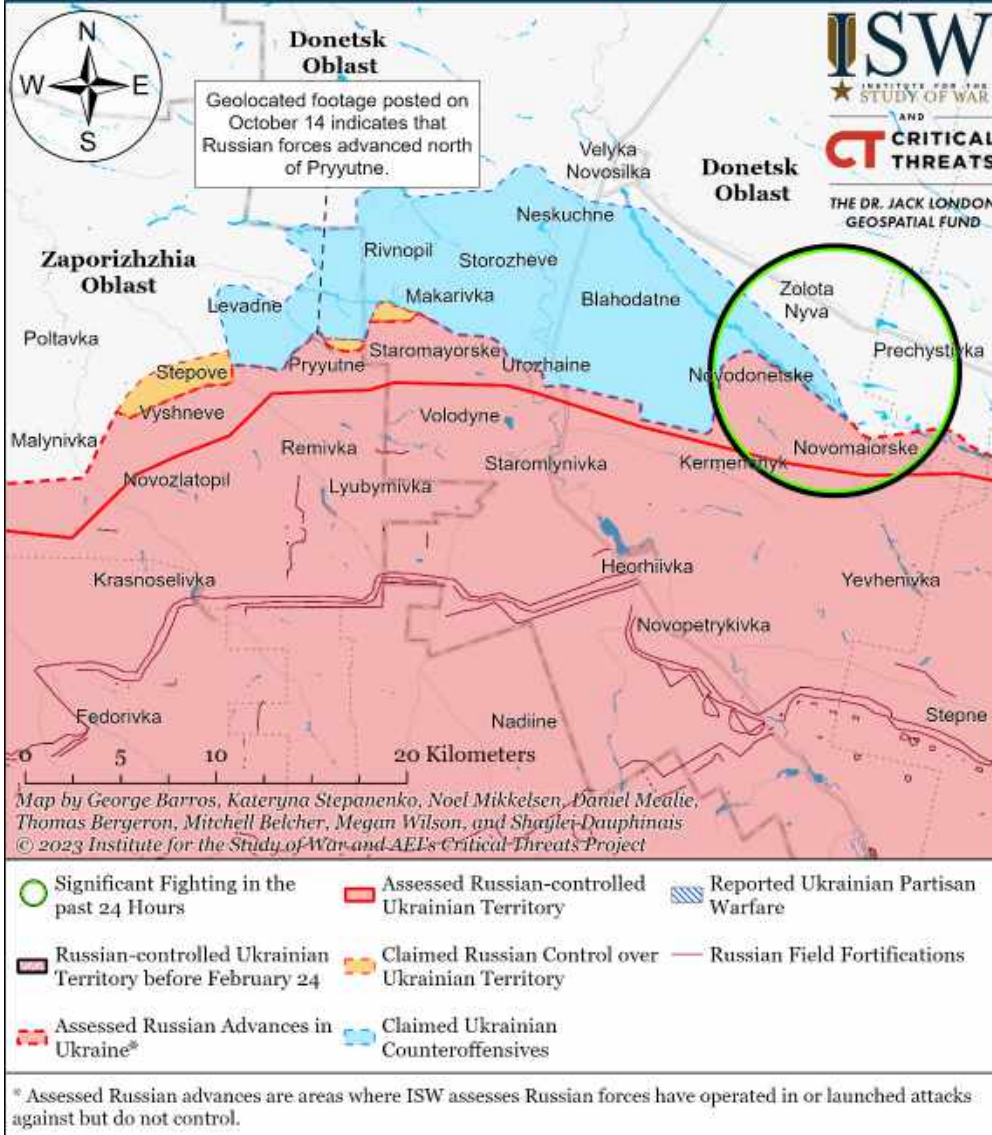
The Russian “Vostok” Battalion, reportedly active in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area, claimed that Ukrainian forces attacked an unspecified section of this frontline on the night of October 17 to 18.[58]

Russian forces conducted ground attacks in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on October 18 but did not make any claimed or confirmed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported on October 18 that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks near Novomayorske (18km southwest of Velyka Novosilka) and south of Zolota Nyva (12km southeast of Velyka Novosilka) and Prechystivka (17km southeast of Velyka Novosilka).[59] A Russian milblogger posted footage claiming to show elements of the Russian 36th Motorized Rifle Brigade (29th Combined Arms Army, Eastern Military District) operating near Mykilske (4km southeast of Vuhledar).[60]

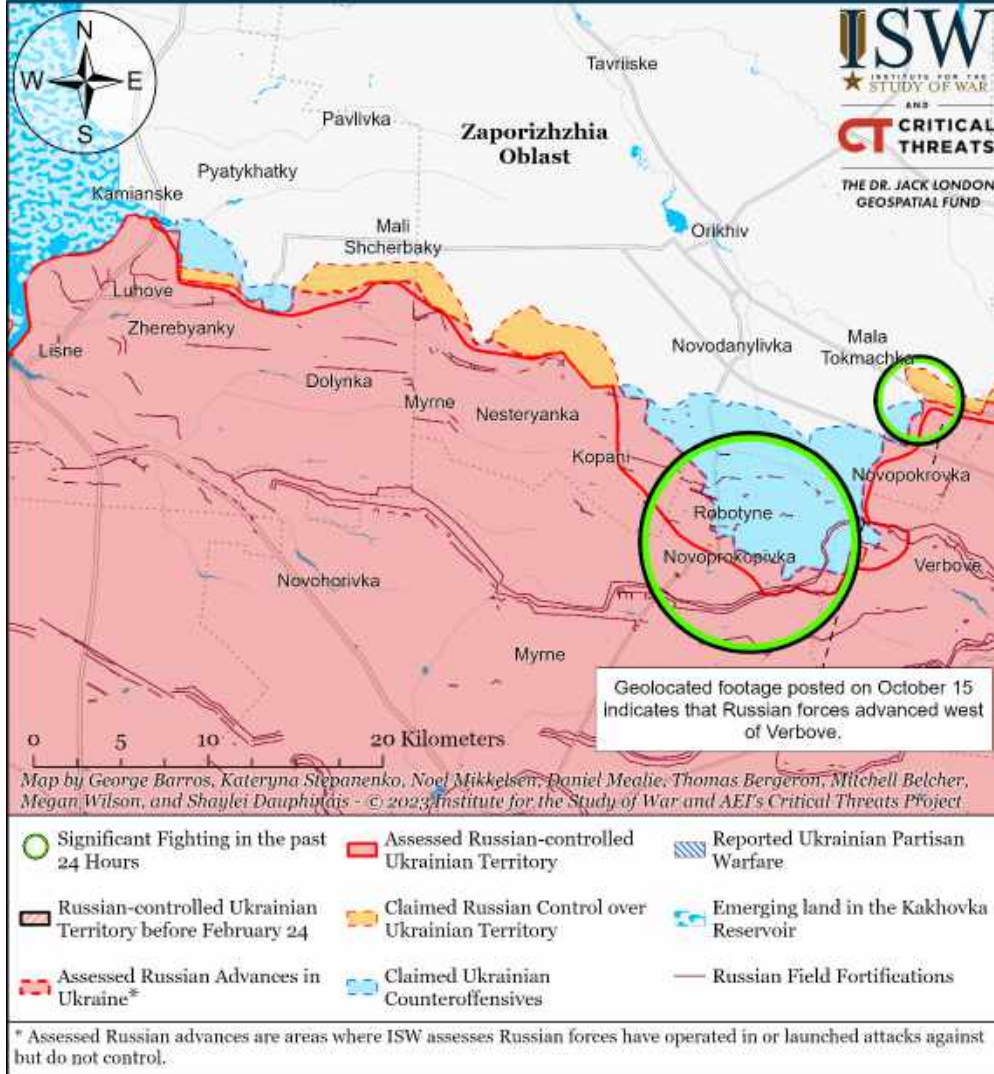
The Russian MoD claimed on October 18 that elements of the Russian Eastern Grouping of Forces repelled a Ukrainian attack near Chervone (9km east of Hulyaipole).[61]

Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast on October 18 and reportedly advanced. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces achieved unspecified partial success south of Robotyne.[62] The Russian MoD claimed that Russian forces repelled a Ukrainian attack near Verbove (10km east of Robotyne).[63] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations along the Kopani-Robotyne-Novoprokopivka-Verbove line (5km northwest to 10km east of Robotyne).[64] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian infantry groups conducted a “large-scale” attack on Verbove and Novoprokopivka (2km south of Robotyne) with four or five units of equipment and groups of 20 people each.[65] A Russian news aggregator claimed that Ukrainian forces attacked near Kopani (5km northwest of Robotyne) on October 17.[66]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around the Vremivka Salient as of October 18, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

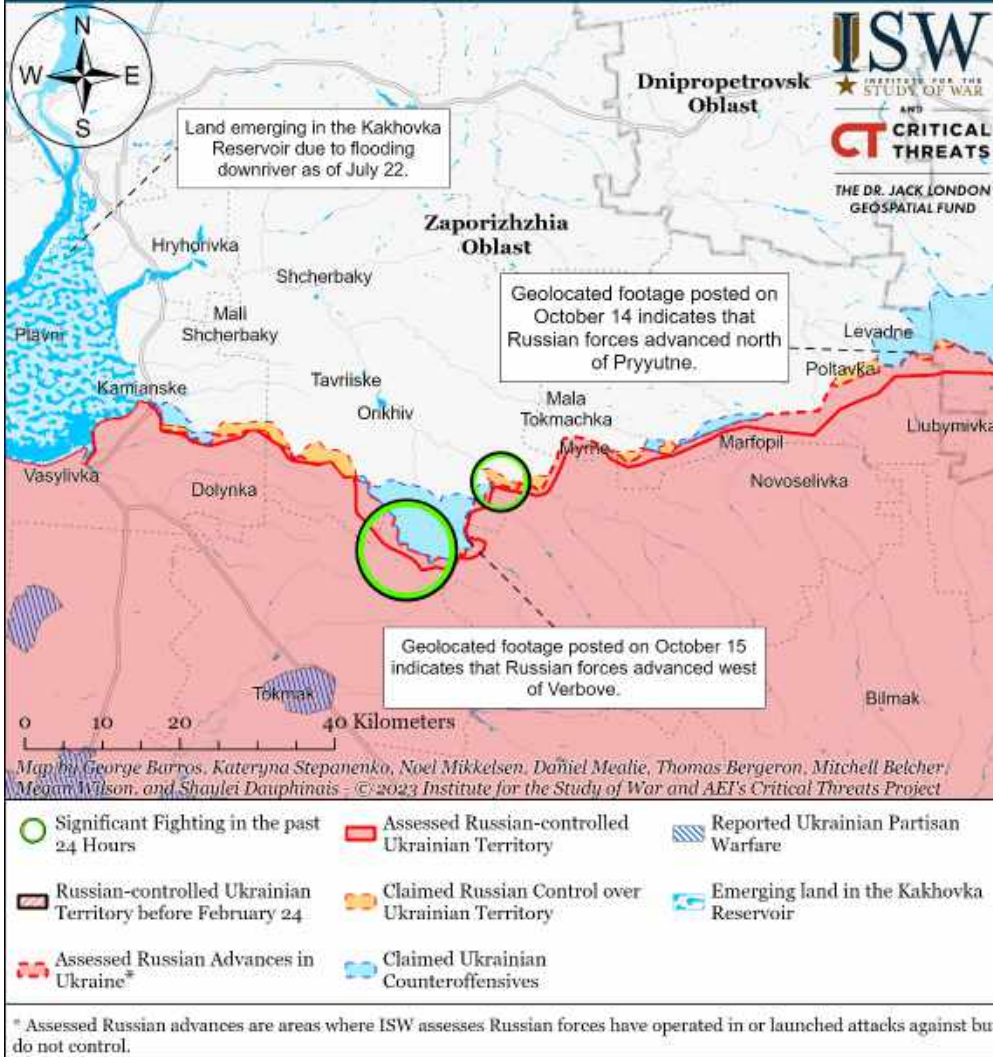


Assessed Control of Terrain Around Pyatykhatky and Robotyne as of October 18, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Russian forces continued counterattacks in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast on October 18 but did not make any claimed or confirmed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attempted to restore lost positions east of Mala Tokmachka (7km southeast of Orikhiv) and southwest of Robotyne.[67] Ukrainian Tavriisk Group of Forces Spokesperson Colonel Oleksandr Shtupun stated that Russian forces are constantly probing Ukrainian defenses and attempting to regain lost positions southwest of Robotyne.[68] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces counterattacked from Kopani to Novodanylivka (6km north of Robotyne), southwest of Robotyne, and near Verbove.[69] Russian milbloggers amplified footage claiming to show elements of the Russian “Osman” Spetsnaz unit, the 136th Motorized Rifle Brigade (58th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Southern Military District [SMD]), and the 42nd Motorized Rifle Division (58th CAA, SMD) operating in the Orikhiv direction.[70]

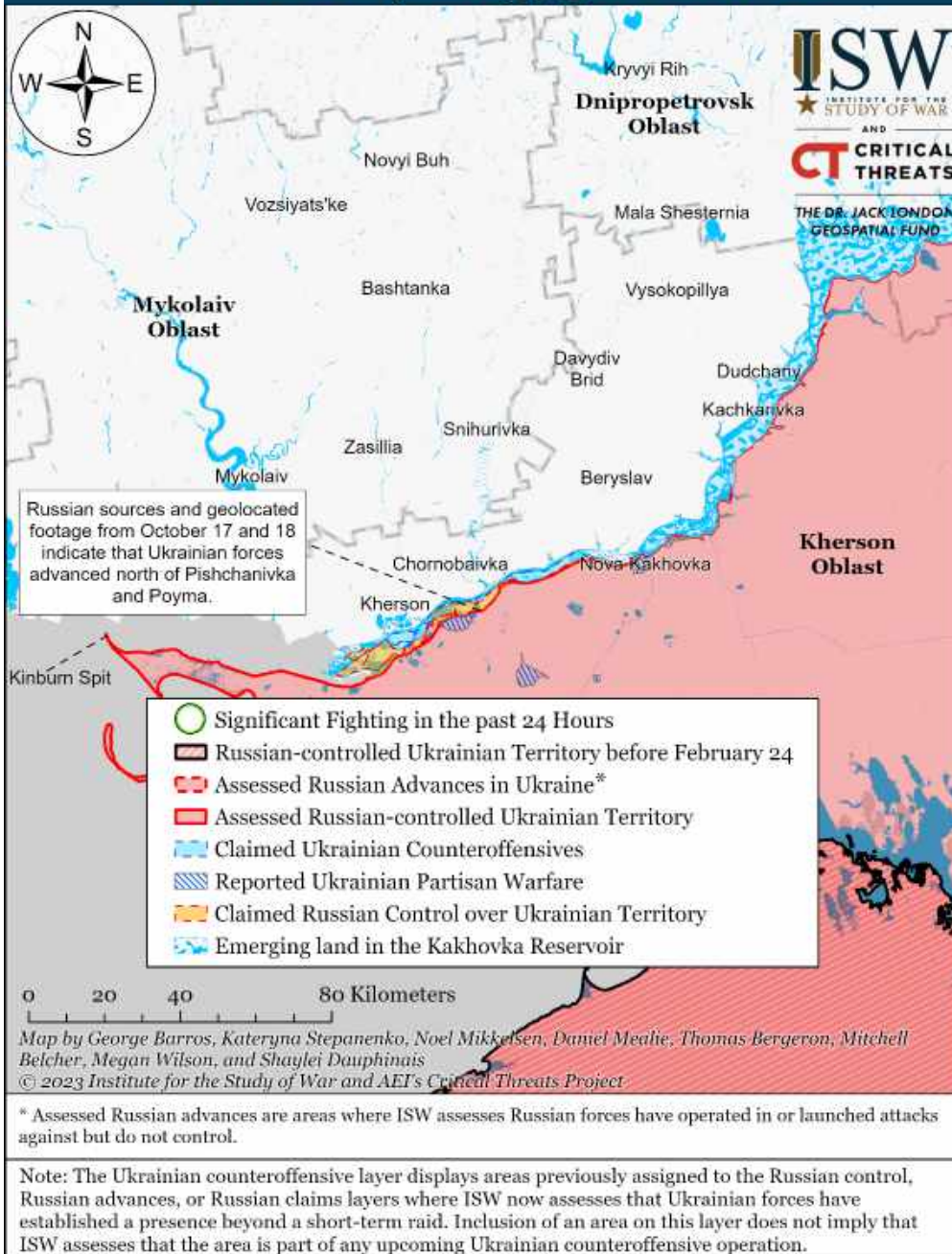
Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhzhia as of October 18, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



The Russian MoD reported that Russian Black Sea Fleet naval aviation destroyed a Ukrainian naval drone in the Black Sea on the night of October 17.[71] A Kremlin-affiliated Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces destroyed two Ukrainian naval drones west of Cape Tarkhankut.[72]

Russian President Vladimir Putin stated during a press conference in Beijing on October 18 that Russian Aerospace (VKS) forces are beginning to patrol the airspace over the Black Sea with MiG-31 aircraft armed with Kh-47M2 Kinzhal hypersonic air-launched ballistic missile systems.[73] Ukrainian Air Force Spokesperson Yuri Ihnat stated that Putin's threat does not fundamentally change the situation for Ukraine and the flights are possibly intended to pose a threat to NATO countries (such as Romania) within the range of Kinzhal missiles.[74]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of October 18, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts (Russian objective: Expand combat power without conducting general mobilization)

Russian opposition outlet *Mediazona* reported on October 17 that the number of convictions against Russian military personnel for serious crimes has increased to a record level in the first half of

2023.[75] Russian courts sentenced 32 Russian military personnel for homicide in the first half of 2023, in comparison with an average of 20 homicide sentences per year in previous years.[76] Notably more Russian military personnel also received sentences for causing grievous bodily harm and sexual assault in the first six months of 2023 than in previous years.[77]

The Russian State Duma proposed two laws on October 18 that will grant mobilization deferments to student workers who are sponsored by their employers, as well as Russian teachers and doctors in rural areas.[78] The Kremlin continues to codify mobilization deferments likely to assuage discontent over continued crypto-mobilization efforts and address persistent human capital shortages.

Russian authorities reportedly opened a missile manufacturing plant in Nekrasovka Raion, Moscow that will produce air defense missiles.[79] Russian sources reported that high-ranking Russian military officials and Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu visited the plant in May 2023 and that Russian authorities constructed the facility in eight and a half months.[80] Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyenin stated that the missile plant should begin producing missiles within a year.[81]

Activities in Russian-occupied areas (Russian objective: Consolidate administrative control of annexed areas; forcibly integrate Ukrainian citizens into Russian sociocultural, economic, military, and governance systems)

Nothing significant to report.

Russian Information Operations and Narratives

Russian President Vladimir Putin reiterated a standard Russian information operation aimed at portraying Ukraine and the West as prolonging the war by refusing to negotiate. Putin claimed at a press conference in Beijing on October 18 that a peace settlement would be possible if Ukraine stopped “theatrical gestures” and the West “took concrete steps” toward negotiations.[82] The Kremlin has not taken any meaningful steps towards opening negotiations beyond calling for, effectively, a complete Ukrainian surrender and the achievement of the Kremlin’s war goals, as ISW has previously documented.[83]

The Russian government has reportedly fined Russian citizens almost 200 million rubles (about \$2 million) since the start of the war under the law against “discrediting” the Russian military. Russian opposition outlet *Mediazona* reported on October 18 that Russian courts have fined Russians about 194 million rubles (about \$1.9 million) in administrative cases for discrediting the Russian military since the law came into force in March 2022.[84]

Significant activity in Belarus (Russian efforts to increase its military presence in Belarus and further integrate Belarus into Russian-favorable frameworks and Wagner Group activity in Belarus)

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu and Belarusian Defense Minister Lieutenant General Viktor Khrenin held a joint board meeting of the Russian and Belarusian ministries of defense in Moscow on October 18.[85] Shoigu and Khrenin both delivered boilerplate rhetoric about Russian-Belarusian military integration efforts and reiterated claims about alleged NATO aggression against the Union State.[86] Khrenin stated that Russian and Belarusian authorities are currently negotiating an agreement that will include measures for Russian defense industrial base (DIB) facilities to repair

Belarusian equipment.[87] It is unclear why the Belarusian military would need to rely upon Russian DIB facilities to repair equipment, however, especially considering the current constraints placed on the Russian DIB by Russian operations in Ukraine.

ISW will continue to report daily observed Russian and Belarusian military activity in Belarus as part of ongoing Kremlin efforts to increase their control over Belarus and other Russian actions in Belarus.

Note: ISW does not receive any classified material from any source, uses only publicly available information, and draws extensively on Russian, Ukrainian, and Western reporting and social media as well as commercially available satellite imagery and other geospatial data as the basis for these reports. References to all sources used are provided in the endnotes of each update.

POWERED BY:



BABELSTREET

[1] https://t.me/z_arhiv/25343; https://t.me/z_arhiv/25343?single ; https://t.me/z_arhiv/25347 https://t.me/kiber_boroshno/4684

[2] <https://t.me/rybar/53351> ; <https://t.me/rybar/53354>

[3] <https://t.me/rybar/53368>

[4] https://t.me/mod_russia/31608

[5] https://t.me/dva_majors/27599

[6] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-17-2023> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-15-2023> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-14-2023> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-13-2023>

[7] <https://t.me/rybar/53368> ; https://t.me/dva_majors/27599 ; https://t.me/dva_majors/27611 ; https://t.me/smotri_z/21351 ; <https://t.me/NeoficialniyBeZsonoV/30138> ; <https://t.me/vysokygovorit/13189> ; <https://t.me/rybar/53370>

[8] <http://kremlin dot ru/events/president/news/72532>

[9] <https://t.me/rybar/53351>

[10] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar100623> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar081123>

[11] <https://armyinform.com.ua/2023/10/17/v-okupantiv-chergovyj-prystup-zagostrennya-maroderskoyi-hvoroby-nataliya-gumenyuk/>

[12] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar101123>

[13] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar101123> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar092323>

[14] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoQ4WvnjPkmvETh3rFFu6PQxdRVVqtJDpD3GnGtj2vMh92Uq1giwyvhNuAS5YzFsrHl>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoZDpk8iBKHtptvZN1DNJ5SLjgZ5pvjgFN2rkeXb6WRfKJiY6TPv7WvnrYTdazUDml>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2MuuayVyquupqcKVNdu2gWRSomeHAzyh3txT7jJEMBQpzDQzp5Bn37pQEZWpuWW7Fl>

[15] <https://t.me/readovkanews/67973>; <https://t.me/wargonzo/15859>; <https://t.me/zvofront/1360>; <https://twitter.com/GirkinGirkin/status/1714507503080177867>

[16] <https://apnews.com/article/atacms-ukraine-longrange-missiles-5fd95f32449d14da22b82d57d6ccab22>

[17] <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/17/world/europe/ukraine-atacms-attacks-russia.html>

[18] <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/72532>

[19] <https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-17-2023>

[20] https://twitter.com/Tatarigami_UA/status/1714650439587885387; <https://twitter.com/bradyafr/status/1714638712666280264?s=20>; https://twitter.com/bayraktar_1love/status/1714545019426574802?s=20; <https://twitter.com/hwtntv/status/1714488176205783231?s=20>

[21] https://twitter.com/Tatarigami_UA/status/1714650439587885387

[22] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar101723>;
https://twitter.com/Tatarigami_UA/status/1714650441982562773

[23] <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/72529> ; <https://t.me/astrapress/40658>

[24] <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/72528>

[25] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar032023>

[26] <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/72529>

[27] <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3238159/all-our-drones-come-china-russian-minister-says> ; <https://suspilne.media/595449-minfin-rosii-pidtvdiv-so-bilsist-droniv-rf-z-kitau/> ; <https://t.me/youlistenedmayak/29070>

[28] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-august-20-2023> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign->

assessment-february-23-2023 ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-march-16-2023> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-march-21-2023>

[29] <https://t.me/readovkanews/67973>

[30] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoQ4WvnjPkmvETh3rFFu6PQxdRVVqtJDpD3GnGtj2vMh92Uq1giwyvhNuAS5YzFsrHl> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoZDpk8iBKHtptvZN1DNJ5SLjgZ5pvjgFN2rkeXb6WRfKJiY6TPv7WvnarYTdazUDml> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2MuuayVyquupqcKVNdu2gWRSomcHAzyh3txT7jJEMBQpzDQzp5Bn37pQEZWpuWW7Fl> ; <https://t.me/luhanskaVTSA/14398>

[31] <https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1714517813665112349?s=20> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-6-2023> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-16-2023>

[32] https://t.me/mod_russia/31607

[33] https://t.me/russian_airborne/2228 ; https://t.me/vdv_ZA_teplinsky/176

[34] <https://t.me/rybar/53359> ; <https://t.me/rybar/53354>

[35] <https://t.me/readovkanews/67973>

[36] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoQ4WvnjPkmvETh3rFFu6PQxdRVVqtJDpD3GnGtj2vMh92Uq1giwyvhNuAS5YzFsrHl>

[37] https://t.me/sons_fatherland/11103

[38] https://t.me/RKadyrov_95/4014

[39] https://t.me/mod_russia/31607

[40] https://t.me/russian_airborne/2228 ; https://t.me/vdv_ZA_teplinsky/176

[41] <https://t.me/readovkanews/67973> ; <https://t.me/wargonzo/15859> ; <https://t.me/zvofront/1360> ; <https://twitter.com/GirkinGirkin/status/1714507503080177867>

[42] <https://t.me/zvofront/1360> ; <https://twitter.com/GirkinGirkin/status/1714507503080177867> ; <https://t.me/wargonzo/15859>

[43] <https://t.me/readovkanews/67973>

[44] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoQ4WvnjPkmvETh3rFFu6PQxdRVVqtJDpD3GnGtj2vMh92Uq1giwyvhNuAS5YzFsrHl> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoZDpk8iBKHtptvZN1DNJ5SLjgZ5pvjgFN2rkeXb6WRfKJiY6TPv7WvnarYTdazUDml> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2MuuayVyquupqcKVNdu2gWRSomcHAzyh3txT7jJEMBQpzDQzp5Bn37pQEZWpuWW7Fl> ; <https://t.me/luhanskaVTSA/14398>

w.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2MuuayVyquupqcKVNdU2gWRSomcHAzyh3txT7jJEMBQpzDQzp5Bn37pQEZWpuWW7F1

[45] https://t.me/boris_rozhin/101215

[46] <https://x.com/VigorousFalcon/status/1714671933764288993?s=20>; <https://x.com/MilitarySummary/status/1714653470840484017?s=20>; https://t.me/z_arhiv/25341; https://t.me/z_arhiv/25341?single

[47] <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4108>

[48] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15859>; https://t.me/dva_majors/27599; <https://t.me/readovkanews/67973>; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4108>

[49] <https://suspilne dot media/596517-v-avdiivci-ocikuut-novih-intensivnih-sturmiv-barabas/>

[50] <https://armyinform.com dot ua/2023/10/18/otrymavshy-zhorstku-vidpovid-vorog-provodyt-peregupuvannya-na-avdiyivskomu-napryamku-oleksandr-shtupun/>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoZDpk8iBKHtptvZN1DNJ5SLjgZ5pvjgFN2rkeXb6WRfKJiY6TPv7WvnrYTdazUDml>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2MuuayVyquupqcKVNdU2gWRSomcHAzyh3txT7jJEMBQpzDQzp5Bn37pQEZWpuWW7F1>

[51] https://t.me/vozhak_Z/452; <https://twitter.com/GirkinGirkin/status/1714322990253445531>

[52] <https://t.me/diomeddog/1087>; https://twitter.com/666_mancer/status/1714514280123388195; <https://twitter.com/RuslanAdiev4/status/1714607751266021640>

[53] <https://x.com/VigorousFalcon/status/1714671933764288993?s=20>; <https://x.com/MilitarySummary/status/1714653470840484017?s=20>; https://t.me/z_arhiv/25341; https://t.me/z_arhiv/25341?single

[54] <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4108>

[55] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoQ4WvnjPkmvETh3rFFu6PQxdRVVqtJDpD3GnGtj2vMh92Uq1giwyvhNuAS5YzFsrHl>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoZDpk8iBKHtptvZN1DNJ5SLjgZ5pvjgFN2rkeXb6WRfKJiY6TPv7WvnrYTdazUDml>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2MuuayVyquupqcKVNdU2gWRSomcHAzyh3txT7jJEMBQpzDQzp5Bn37pQEZWpuWW7F1>

[56] <https://suspilne dot media/596531-koznogo-dna-prilitae-po-30-50-droniv-kamikadze-presoficer-pro-oboronu-mariinki/>; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oB-JY_Z2oLY

[57] <https://t.me/readovkanews/67973>

[58] https://t.me/batalyon_vostok/223

[59] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoZDpk8iBKHtptvZN1DNJ5SLjgZ5pvjgFN2rkeXb6WRfKJiY6TPv7WvnrYTdazUDml>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2MuuayVyquupqcKVNdU2gWRSomcHAzyh3txT7jJEMBQpzDQzp5Bn37pQEZWpuWW7F1>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2MuuayVyquupqcKVNdU2gWRSomcHAzyh3txT7jJEMBQpzDQzp5Bn37pQEZWpuWW7F1>

//www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoQ4WvnjPkmvETh3rFFu6PQxdRVVqtJDpD3GnGtj2vMh92Uq1giwyvhNuAS5YzFsrHl

[60] https://t.me/voin_dv/5507

[61] https://t.me/mod_russia/31607

[62] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoZDpk8iBKHtptvZN1DNJ5SLjgZ5pvjgFN2rkeXb6WRfKJiY6TPv7WvnarYTdazUDml>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2MuuayVyquupqcKVNdU2gWRSomcHAzyh3txT7jJEMBQpzDQzp5Bn37pQEZWpuWW7Fl>

[63] https://t.me/mod_russia/31608

[64] <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/55171> ; <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/55171> ; https://t.me/dva_majors/27599

[65] https://t.me/rusich_army/11387 ; https://t.me/dva_majors/27599

[66] <https://t.me/readovkanews/67973>

[67] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoZDpk8iBKHtptvZN1DNJ5SLjgZ5pvjgFN2rkeXb6WRfKJiY6TPv7WvnarYTdazUDml>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2MuuayVyquupqcKVNdU2gWRSomcHAzyh3txT7jJEMBQpzDQzp5Bn37pQEZWpuWW7Fl> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoQ4WvnjPkmvETh3rFFu6PQxdRVVqtJDpD3GnGtj2vMh92Uq1giwyvhNuAS5YzFsrHl>

[68] <https://armyinform.com dot ua/2023/10/18/otrymavshy-zhorstku-vidpovid-vorog-provodyt-peregrupuvannya-na-avdiyivskomu-napryamku-oleksandr-shtupun/>

[69] https://t.me/russian_airborne/2228; https://t.me/vdv_ZA_teplinsky/176 ; <https://t.me/wargonzo/15859>

[70] https://t.me/ZA_FROHT/22932; https://t.me/vdv_ZA_teplinsky/173 ; <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/55171>

[71] https://t.me/mod_russia/31588 ; <https://t.me/astrapress/40599>

[72] <https://t.me/rybar/53359>

[73] <http://kremlin dot ru/events/president/news/72532> ; <https://suspilne dot media/596857-putin-doruciv-litakam-z-kindzalami-postijno-patruvati-nejtralnu-zonu-nad-cornim-morem/>

[74] <https://suspilne dot media/596949-u-povitranih-silah-prokomentovali-risenna-putina-trimati-kindzali-nad-cornim-morem/>

[75] <https://zona.media/news/2023/10/17/suddep>

[76] <https://zona dot media/news/2023/10/17/suddep>

[77] <https://zona.media/news/2023/10/17/suddep>

[78] <https://t.me/mobilizationnews/15937> ; <https://www.rbc dot ru/politics/18/10/2023/652e74949a79477293f3ca03> ; <https://t.me/mobilizationnews/15941> ; <https://t.me/sotaproject/68039>

[79] https://t.me/istories_media/3978 ; <https://storage.googleapis.com/istories/news/2023/10/18/v-moskve-otkrili-raketnii-zavod-sredi-zhilikh-domov-v-5-km-ot-mkad/index.html> ; https://t.me/mod_russia/31568 ; https://www.vedomosti dot u/press_releases/2022/08/09/v-industrialnom-parke-rudnyovo-poyavitsya-bolee-3-tis-rabochih-mest ; https://www.vedomosti dot ru/press_releases/2023/01/10/v-industrialnom-parke-rudnyovo-zaversheno-stroitelstvo-16-korpusov ; <https://realty.rbc dot ru/news/61ae00d19a7947555dfa00b2> ; <https://www.mos dot ru/mayor/themes/183299/8742050/> ; <https://t.me/sotavisionmedia/20228>

[80] https://t.me/istories_media/3978 ; <https://storage.googleapis.com/istories/news/2023/10/18/v-moskve-otkrili-raketnii-zavod-sredi-zhilikh-domov-v-5-km-ot-mkad/index.html> ; https://t.me/mod_russia/31568 ; https://www.vedomosti dot u/press_releases/2022/08/09/v-industrialnom-parke-rudnyovo-poyavitsya-bolee-3-tis-rabochih-mest ; https://www.vedomosti dot ru/press_releases/2023/01/10/v-industrialnom-parke-rudnyovo-zaversheno-stroitelstvo-16-korpusov ; <https://realty.rbc dot ru/news/61ae00d19a7947555dfa00b2> ; <https://www.mos dot ru/mayor/themes/183299/8742050/> ; <https://t.me/sotavisionmedia/20228>

[81] https://t.me/istories_media/3978 ; <https://storage.googleapis.com/istories/news/2023/10/18/v-moskve-otkrili-raketnii-zavod-sredi-zhilikh-domov-v-5-km-ot-mkad/index.html> ; https://t.me/mod_russia/31568 ; https://www.vedomosti dot u/press_releases/2022/08/09/v-industrialnom-parke-rudnyovo-poyavitsya-bolee-3-tis-rabochih-mest ; https://www.vedomosti dot ru/press_releases/2023/01/10/v-industrialnom-parke-rudnyovo-zaversheno-stroitelstvo-16-korpusov ; <https://realty.rbc dot ru/news/61ae00d19a7947555dfa00b2> ; <https://www.mos dot ru/mayor/themes/183299/8742050/> ; <https://t.me/sotavisionmedia/20228>

[82] <http://kremlin dot ru/events/president/news/72532>

[83] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/weakness-lethal-why-putin-invaded-ukraine-and-how-war-must-end> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/reframing-us-policy-debate-%E2%80%98long-war%E2%80%99-ukraine> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-april-7-2023> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-march-31-2023>

[84] <https://t.me/severrealii/20739> ; <https://www.severreal.org/a/s-nachala-voyny-rossiyan-oshtrafovali-za-diskreditatsiyu-pochti-na-200-millionov-rublej/32641567.html> ; <https://zona dot media/news/2023/10/17/stat>

[85] <https://telegra dot ph/Vstupitelnoe-slovo-Ministra-oborony-Rossijskoj-Federacii-generalarmii-Sergeya-SHojgu-na-zasedaniya-sovmestnoj-Kollegii-ministe-10-18>

; https://t.me/mod_russia/31600 ; https://t.me/mod_russia/31602
; https://t.me/mod_russia/31603 ; https://t.me/mod_russia/31604 ; https://t.me/mod_russia/31605

[86] <https://telegra dot ph/Vstupitelnoe-slovo-Ministra-oborony-Respubliki-Belarus-general-lejtenanta-Viktora-Hrenina-na-zasedaniya-sovmestnoj-Kollegii-mini-10-18> ;
https://t.me/mod_russia/31601 <https://t.me/modmilby/33016> ; <https://t.me/modmilby/33016> ; https://t.me/mod_russia/31600 ; https://t.me/mod_russia/31602
; https://t.me/mod_russia/31603 ; https://t.me/mod_russia/31604 ; https://t.me/mod_russia/31605

[87] <https://telegra dot ph/Vstupitelnoe-slovo-Ministra-oborony-Respubliki-Belarus-general-lejtenanta-Viktora-Hrenina-na-zasedaniya-sovmestnoj-Kollegii-mini-10-18> ;
https://t.me/mod_russia/31601 <https://t.me/modmilby/33016> ; <https://t.me/modmilby/33016>

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, October 17, 2023

Karolina Hird, Riley Bailey, Angelica Evans, and Mason Clark
October 17, 2023, 6:30pm ET

Click [here](#) to see ISW's interactive map of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

Click [here](#) to access ISW's archive of interactive time-lapse maps of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. These maps complement the static control-of-terrain map that ISW produces daily by showing a dynamic frontline. ISW will update this time-lapse map archive monthly.

Note: The data cut-off for this product was 1:00pm ET on October 17. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the October 18 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Ukraine used US-provided ATACMS long-range missiles to strike Russian targets in occupied Ukraine for the first time on October 17. *The Wall Street Journal* and other Western media outlets confirmed on October 17 that the US “secretly” provided Ukraine with ATACMS with a range of 165km in recent days and reported that Ukrainian forces already used ATACMS to strike Russian-controlled airfields in occupied Berdyansk, Zaporizhia Oblast and Luhansk City, Luhansk Oblast.[1] Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky also stated in his nightly address on October 17 that ATACMS “have proven themselves” but did not directly confirm ATACMS were used in these strikes, and multiple Russian sources claimed Ukrainian forces used ATACMS in the Berdyansk strike.[2] Various Russian sources amplified images reportedly of ATACMS M74 cluster submunitions found at the site of the strike in Berdyansk.[3] The US likely transferred the ATACMS systems in secret to provide Ukrainian forces operational surprise, and the overall shock in the Russian information space suggests that Ukraine achieved the desired effect. Ukrainian Special Operations Forces Command did not specify that Ukrainian forces used ATACMS in the strikes but stated that the strikes destroyed nine Russian helicopters of various models, other unspecified special equipment, an anti-aircraft missile launcher, an ammunition warehouse, and damaged runway infrastructure.[4] Footage reportedly from the Berdyansk airfield shows heavy fires and explosions due to the continued detonation of ammunition in an ammunition depot.[5] NASA Fire Information for Resource Management (FIRMS) data from October 17 also confirms heat signatures following explosions in Berdyansk but has not yet confirmed heat signatures at the Luhansk airfield.[6]

The Ukrainian ATACMS strikes on operationally significant Russian airfields in Ukraine will likely prompt the Russian command to disperse aviation assets and withdraw some aircraft to airfields further from the frontline. Russian forces notably operated rotary-wing aircraft from the Berdyansk airfield in the early months of the ongoing Ukrainian counteroffensive in western Zaporizhia Oblast to great effect against large mechanized Ukrainian assaults.[7] Previous satellite imagery of the Berdyansk airfield showed that Russian forces dispersed aircraft across the airfield, and Ukrainian forces were likely only able to conduct strikes on individual aircraft with previously available long-range missiles.[8] The cluster munition-armed version of the ATACMS long range missiles will allow Ukrainian forces to conduct strikes on Russian airfields that can more widely destroy Russian aircraft and other assets. Russian milbloggers immediately drew parallels between the Ukrainian strikes on the Berdyansk and Luhansk City airfields and a series of Ukrainian HIMARS strikes on the Chornobaivka airfield in Kherson Oblast during the 2022 Kherson counteroffensive.[9] The arrival of Western-provided HIMARS allowed Ukrainian forces to conduct repeated strikes on the Chornobaivka airfield, which caused significant Russian aviation losses, and Russian command withdrew military equipment and aviation from the airfield due to their inability to combat Ukrainian HIMARS strikes.[10] Russian milbloggers noted that Russian forces adapted their airfields to Ukrainian long-range strike capabilities but that ATACMS are a new missile threat which will similarly force the Russian command to adapt once again.[11] **The Russian military has consistently shown it can adapt to new Ukrainian strike capabilities – but only after suffering initial and pronounced losses from Ukrainian capabilities Russian commanders realistically should have prepared for.**

The likely dispersal of Russian aircraft at airfields throughout occupied Ukraine and the relocation of aviation assets further away from the frontline will likely disrupt Russian aviation support for defensive efforts and localized offensive operations. The relocation of aircraft to airfields further in the rear will likely impact the loitering time that Russian aviation will have to support operations. This will likely be particularly significant for Russian rotary-wing aircraft, which operated in relatively small sections of the frontline for long periods of time to degrade advancing mechanized Ukrainian forces at the beginning of the counteroffensive in June and July of 2023.[12] The dispersal of aviation assets at a larger number of airfields will also likely present the Russian Aerospace Forces (VKS) greater coordination and sustainment challenges.

The arrival of ATACMS long-range missiles also poses a significant threat to Russian ammunition depots in rear areas and will likely force the Russian command to choose between fortifying existing depots or

further dispersing depots throughout occupied Ukraine. The arrival of HIMARS to Ukraine in June 2022 allowed Ukrainian forces to conduct an operationally significant interdiction campaign in support of counteroffensive operations in Kherson and Kharkiv oblasts, part of which targeted overly concentrated Russian ammunition depots.[13] The Russian command reluctantly moved away from using highly concentrated ammunition depots, extending Russian logistics along longer ground lines of communications (GLOCs), which ultimately complicated the provision of ammunition and supplies to the frontline to a certain degree.[14] ATACMS will likely present Russian forces with a similar challenge, and Russian forces can either focus on fortifying existing depots or create an even more dispersed and therefore over-extended logistics system for ammunition.

The Russian information space expressed widespread fear over the use of ATACMS, and Russian concerns over the possibility of future strikes will likely impact Russian decision-making beyond the current Ukrainian ability to sustain regular ATACMS strikes. Russian sources bemoaned the strikes on the Berdyansk and Luhansk City airfields as one of the most devastating Ukrainian strikes on a Russian target since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.[15] Russian sources particularly credited the use of ATACMS for the severity of the strike and expressed fears that the Russian command would not adapt quickly enough to the new missile threat.[16] The Russian command will likely have to consider the potential Ukrainian use of ATACMS when making operational and tactical decisions about the placement of military assets regardless of the frequency of such strikes, and the current level of Russian concern suggests that this calculation may be particularly pronounced in the coming weeks. Ukraine has likely only received a limited number of ATACMS, however, and will need more if it is to sustain and amplify these initial effects.[17]

Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations and advanced near Bakhmut and in western Zaporizhia Oblast. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive actions south of Bakhmut and had partial success west of Verbove (10km east of Robotyne in western Zaporizhia Oblast).[18] Geolocated footage posted on October 16 also indicates that Ukrainian forces advanced northwest of Zaliznyanske (9km northwest of Bakhmut).[19]

The US confirmed on October 17 that all 31 previously pledged American M1 Abrams main battle tanks have arrived in Ukraine.[20] US Army Europe and Africa (USAREUR-AF) Spokesperson Colonel Martin O'Donnell reported that all of the Ukrainian servicemembers who trained on the tanks alongside US forces in Germany have also returned to Ukraine.[21] US military officials noted that it will likely take some time for Ukraine to deploy the Abrams to the frontline.

The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) posted footage on October 17 of Russian forces operating the new TOS-2 "Tosochka" thermobaric artillery system in Ukraine.[22] The Russian MoD claimed that Central Military District (CMD) Radiation, Chemical, and Biological Defense Troops used the TOS-2 system to strike a Ukrainian fortified area in an unspecified area of the front, potentially in reference to Avdiivka, where some CMD elements have recently deployed to support offensive operations north of Donetsk City.[23] Russian media responded to the MoD's footage and noted that the TOS-2 is a modernized and improved version of the TOS-1A "Solntsepek" system that Russian forces have heavily employed across the theater in Ukraine.[24] Thermobaric artillery systems such as the TOS-1A and TOS-2 are military district-level assets, and their commitment to certain sectors of the front may be indicative of Russian operational prioritization of certain areas.[25]

The Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) reportedly issued an informal warning to a prominent Russian milblogger who is often critical of the Ministry of Defense's conduct of the war on October 16 for discrediting the Russian military, the latest in a series of government efforts to gain further control over the Russian information space. The milblogger claimed on October 17 that he writes candidly about the situation on the front to better inform Russian military leadership about the issues on the front that local commanders are unwilling to report.[26] The milblogger claimed that MVD is targeting Russian milbloggers who helped publicize the mistreatment of elements of the Russian 205th Separate Motorized Rifle Brigade (49th Combined Arms Army, Southern Military District) in the Kherson direction in late August 2023, which ultimately resulted in the removal of the brigade's commander.[27] The milblogger articulated a list of 14 other channels that "speak the truth and are not afraid," some of which ISW has observed be critical of the Russian military.[28] The milblogger likely shared this list of channels to coalesce support for targeted milbloggers, and the list does not indicate that these channels are part of an organized group.

Russia continues to set various legislative conditions to prepare the information space for the March 2024 presidential elections. The Russian State Duma adopted a bill in its first reading on October 17 that clarifies provisions on the Russian law on presidential elections and stipulates that campaign materials cannot be shown on sites restricted by the Russian Federal Service for Supervision of Communications, Information Technology and Mass Media (Roskomnadzor).[29] The bill will also ban people from taking photographs and videos at polling stations, require registered candidates to submit information to their electoral commission if they have a criminal record, and establish a cost limit for

the production of campaign materials.[30] Several of these provisions already exist in laws governing basic electoral rights, but these provisions will clarify the specific law on presidential elections in advance of the March 2024 election cycle.

Key Takeaways:

- **Ukraine used US-provided ATACMS long-range missiles to strike Russian targets in occupied Ukraine for the first time on October 17.**
- **The Ukrainian ATACMS strikes on operationally significant Russian airfields in Ukraine will likely prompt the Russian command to disperse aviation assets and withdraw some aircraft to airfields further from the frontline.**
- **The Russian military has consistently shown it can adapt to new Ukrainian strike capabilities – but only after suffering initial and pronounced losses from Ukrainian capabilities Russian commanders realistically should have prepared for.**
- **The arrival of ATACMS long-range missiles also presents a significant threat to Russian ammunition depots in rear areas and will likely force the Russian command to choose between fortifying existing depots or further dispersing depots throughout occupied Ukraine.**
- **The Russian information space expressed widespread fear over the use of ATACMS, and Russian concerns over the possibility of future strikes will likely impact Russian decision-making beyond the current Ukrainian ability to sustain regular ATACMS strikes.**
- **Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations and advanced near Bakhmut and in western Zaporizhia Oblast.**
- **The Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) reportedly issued an informal warning to a prominent Russian milblogger who is often critical of the Ministry of Defense’s conduct of the war on October 16 for discrediting the Russian military.**
- **Russian forces continued offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line, near Bakhmut, near Avdiivka, southwest of Donetsk City, in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area, and in western Zaporizhia Oblast, and advanced in certain areas of the front.**
- **Russia continues to take steps to codify the inclusion of volunteer formations within Rosgvardia.**
- **The Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) continues efforts to consolidate control of orthodox diocese in occupied areas of Ukraine.**
- **Russian President Vladimir Putin held bilateral negotiations with Hungarian President Viktor Orban and Mongolian President Ukhnaagiin Khurelsukh in Beijing on October 17.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of October 17, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Megan Wilson, and Shaylei Dauphinais

© 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

We do not report in detail on Russian war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We will continue to evaluate and report on the effects of these criminal activities on the Ukrainian military and the Ukrainian population and specifically on combat in Ukrainian urban areas. We utterly condemn these Russian violations of the laws of armed conflict, Geneva Conventions, and humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

- Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine (comprised of two subordinate main efforts)
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and encircle northern Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis
- Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts
- Activities in Russian-occupied areas
- Russian Information Operations and Narratives

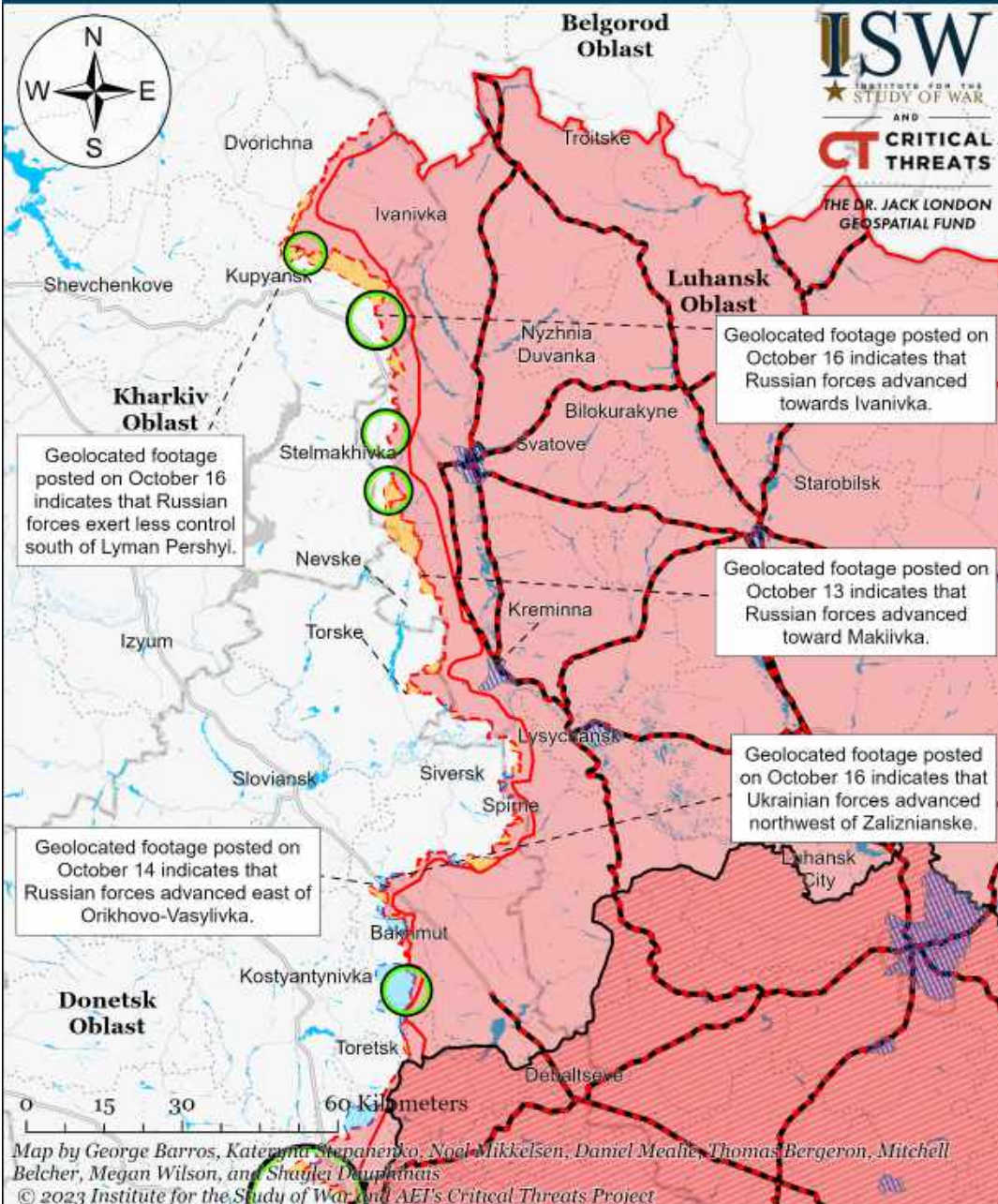
Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Luhansk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and northern Donetsk Oblast)

Russian forces continued offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on October 17 and made confirmed advances in the Kupyansk direction. Geolocated footage posted on October 17 shows that Russian forces advanced about 1.5km west of Yahidne towards Ivanivka, about 20km southeast of Kupyansk.[31] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked in the Kupyansk direction near Synkivka (8km northeast of Kupyansk), Ivanivka (20km southeast of Kupyansk), and Kyslivka (23km southeast of Kupyansk) and in the Svatove direction near Stelmakhivka (15km northwest of Svatove) and Nadiya (15km southwest of Svatove).[32] Ukrainian Eastern Group of Forces Spokesperson Captain Ilya Yevlash reported that Russian forces are concentrating near Synkivka, Ivanivka, Stelmakhivka, and Nadiya in an effort to consolidate advantageous positions before the onset of more challenging weather conditions.[33] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces continued offensive operations towards Kupyansk and improved their tactical positions northeast of Kupyansk and west of Svatove.[34] One milblogger claimed that Russian forces are advancing through fortified areas west of Ploshchanka (20km southwest of Svatove) and that Russian forces continue to strike Ukrainian crossings across the Oskil River that runs west of Svatove.[35]

The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted limited and unsuccessful counterattacks along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on October 17.[36] Several Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces are unsuccessfully trying to dislodge Russian troops from their positions around Kupyansk and near Svatove.[37]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of October 17, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Russian Ground Lines of Communication
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory

* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

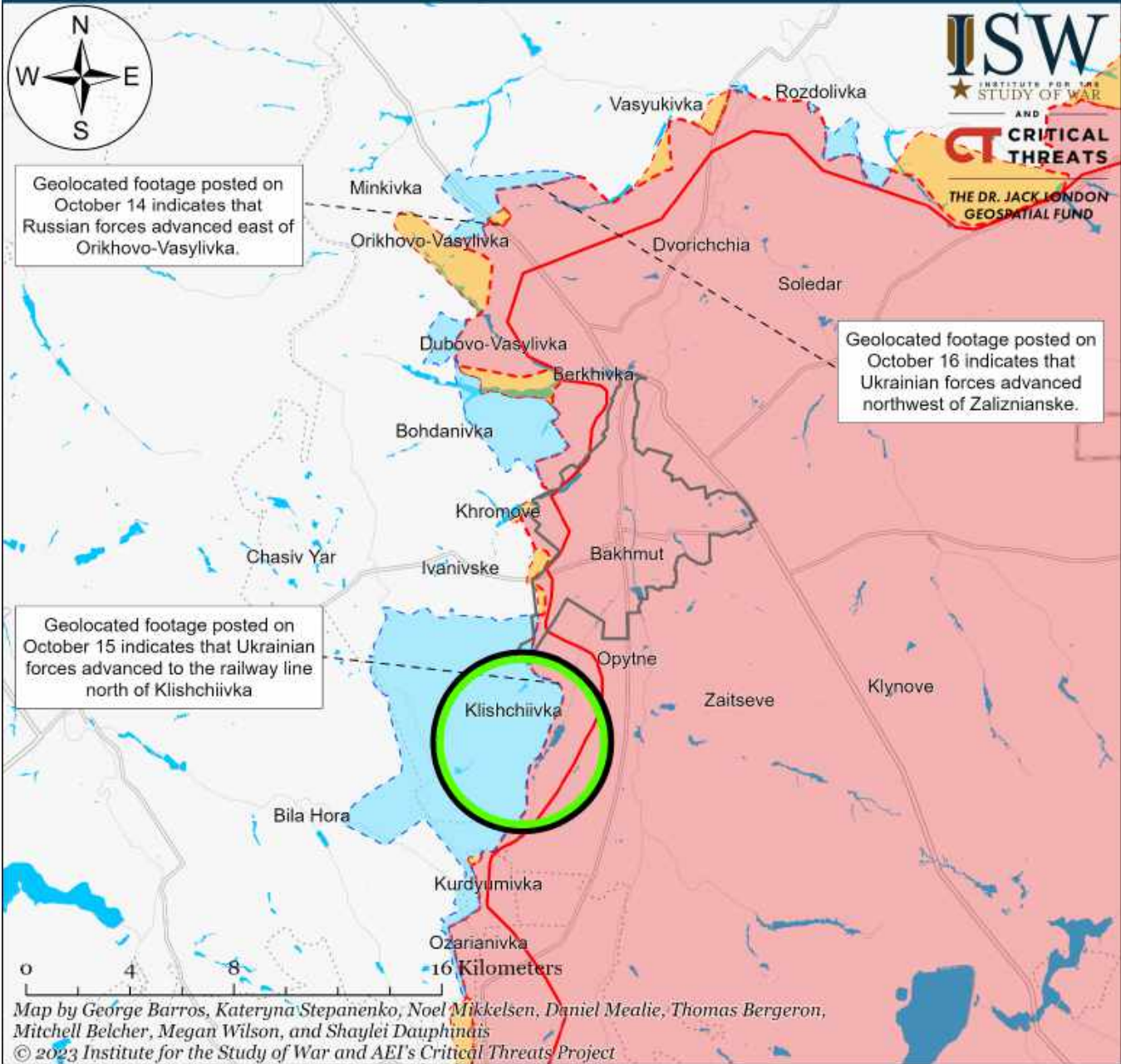
Note: A Russian source claimed on October 13 that Russian forces repelled a Ukrainian attack near Klishchiivka and were able to penetrate up to half a kilometer into Ukrainian defenses.

Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Donetsk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)

Ukrainian forces continued offensive actions near Bakhmut on October 17 and made confirmed advances. Geolocated footage posted on October 16 indicates that Ukrainian forces advanced northwest of Zaliznyanske (9km northwest of Bakhmut).[38] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that elements of the Russian Southern Grouping of Forces repelled nine Ukrainian attacks in the Donetsk direction.[39] A Kremlin-affiliated Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut).[40] Russian milbloggers claimed on October 16 that fighting continued near Orikhovo-Vasylivka (10km northwest of Bakhmut) and along the Klishchiivka-Andriivka-Kurdyumivka line (7–13km southwest of Bakhmut).[41] Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets claimed that Ukrainian forces broke through Russian defenses north of Klishchiivka manned by elements of the 1428th Motorized Rifle Regiment and 102nd Motorized Rifle Regiment (150th Motorized Rifle Division, 8th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Southern Military District [SMD]).[42]

Russian forces continued attacks near Bakhmut on October 17 but did not make any confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported Russian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks near Klishchiivka and Andriivka (10km southwest of Bakhmut).[43] Ukrainian Eastern Grouping of Forces Spokesperson Captain Ilya Yevlash stated that Russian forces are counterattacking near Kurdyumivka (13km southwest of Bakhmut) and transferring reserves to the area.[44] Mashovets stated that elements of the Russian 1428th Motorized Rifle Regiment retreated from the railway line near Klishchiivka on October 15, while elements of the Luhansk People’s Republic (LNR) 4th Motorized Rifle Brigade retreated from the railway line towards Odradivka (7km south of Bakhmut).[45] Mashovets warned that elements of the Russian 57th Motorized Rifle Brigade (5th CAA, Eastern Military District [EMD]), 51st Airborne (VDV) Regiment (106th VDV Division), and 68th Tank Regiment (150th Motorized Rifle Division, 8th CAA, SMD) may counterattack near Andriivka in the future.

Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of October 17, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



- Bakhmut City Limits
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare

* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

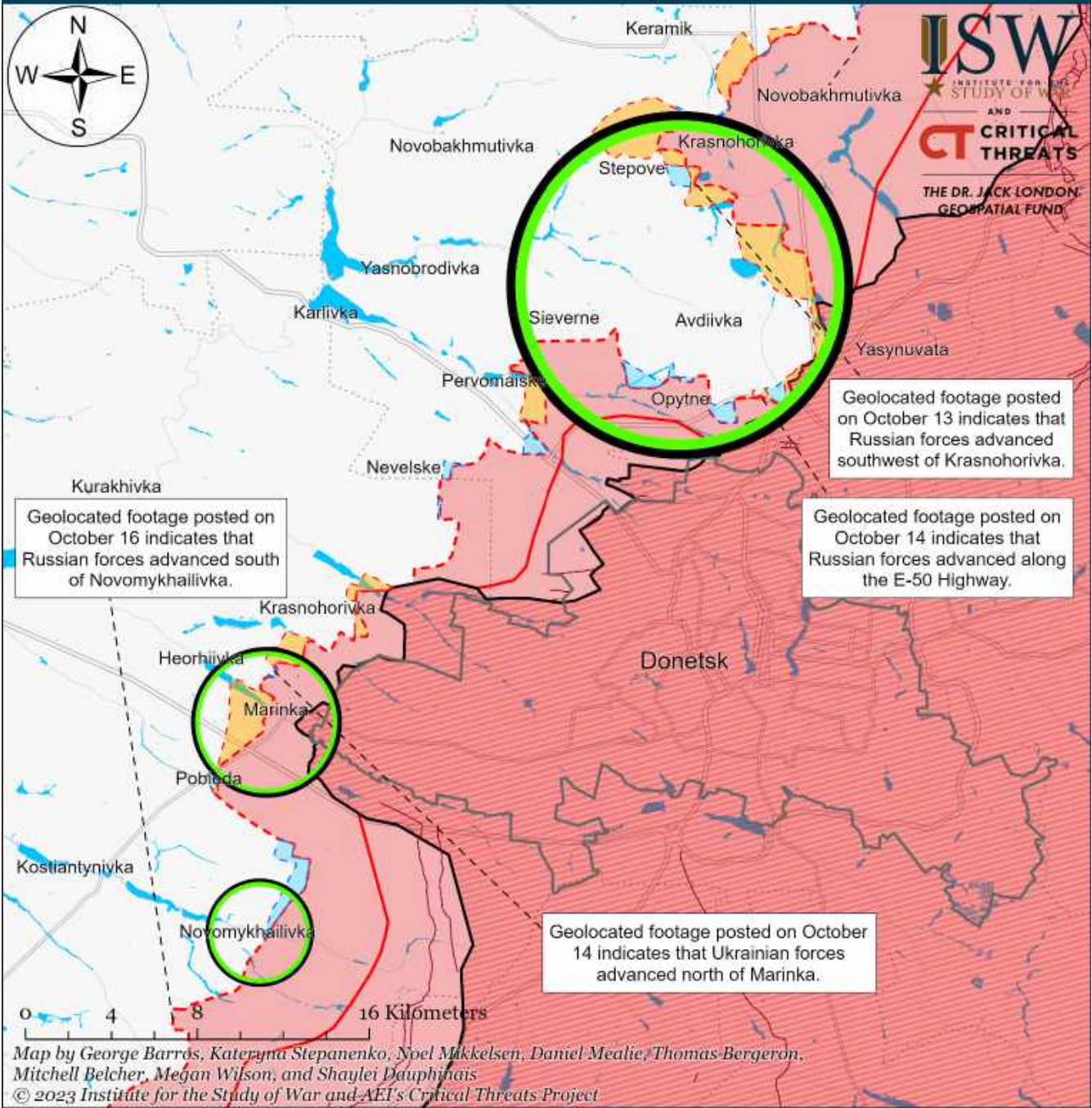
Note: A Russian source claimed on October 13 that Russian forces successfully repelled a Ukrainian attack near Klishchiivka and were able to penetrate up to half a kilometer into Ukrainian defenses.

Russian forces continued offensive operations near Avdiivka on October 17 but did not make any confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks near Avdiivka and south of Tonenke (5km west of Avdiivka).[46] Ukrainian military officials noted that the intensity of Russian attacks near Avdiivka has decreased.[47] Ukrainian Ministry of Internal Affairs Freedom Legion serviceman Major Maksym Morozov stated that Russian forces have not established footholds in the few positions they captured near Avdiivka and are withdrawing from these positions.[48] A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces are gaining a foothold in unspecified captured positions in the Avdiivka direction, however.[49] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces achieved unspecified tactical successes in the southern part of the Avdiivka direction.[50] The milblogger claimed that there are unconfirmed reports that Russian forces are advancing near Stepove (7km northwest of Avdiivka) and are attempting to advance near Vodyane (7km southwest of Avdiivka) and Opytne (3km southwest of Klishchiivka). Another Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces are attempting to advance near Spartak (4km south of Avdiivka) but noted that Russian forces have not advanced east of Avdiivka.[51] Another prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces also attacked on Avdiivka's southern approaches, in the direction of Sieverne (5km west of Avdiivka), and near Pervomaiske (11km southwest of Avdiivka).[52] A Russian milblogger claiming to be serving in the Avdiivka direction claimed on October 16 that Russian forces are "stuck" in their positions near Avdiivka and are struggling to advance further due to the Ukrainian defenses.[53] A Russian news aggregator claimed that Russian forces attacked near Sieverne and advanced south of Avdiivka and near Stepove (7km northwest of Avdiivka) on October 16.[54] Mashovets noted that the Russian military may transfer additional DNR units, including the 1st and 9th Brigades, the 10th Tank Battalion, 13th "Somalia" Separate Assault Battalion, and 80th "Sparta" Separate Reconnaissance Battalion, as well as the 242nd Motorized Rifle Regiment (20th Motorized Rifle Division, 8th CAA, SMD) near Opytne or the Vodyane-Tonenke road.

Russian forces conducted attacks southwest of Donetsk City on October 17 but did not make any confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks near Marinka (on the southwestern outskirts of Donetsk City) and Novomykhailivka (10km south of Marinka).[55] A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces conducted attacks in Marinka and near Stepne (14km south of Donetsk City).[56] The Ukrainian Tavriisk Group of Forces Press Service stated that Russian forces have increased their attacks in the Marinka direction.[57]

Ukrainian forces did not conduct any claimed or confirmed ground attacks southwest of Donetsk City on October 17.

Assessed Control of Terrain near Donetsk City as of October 17, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

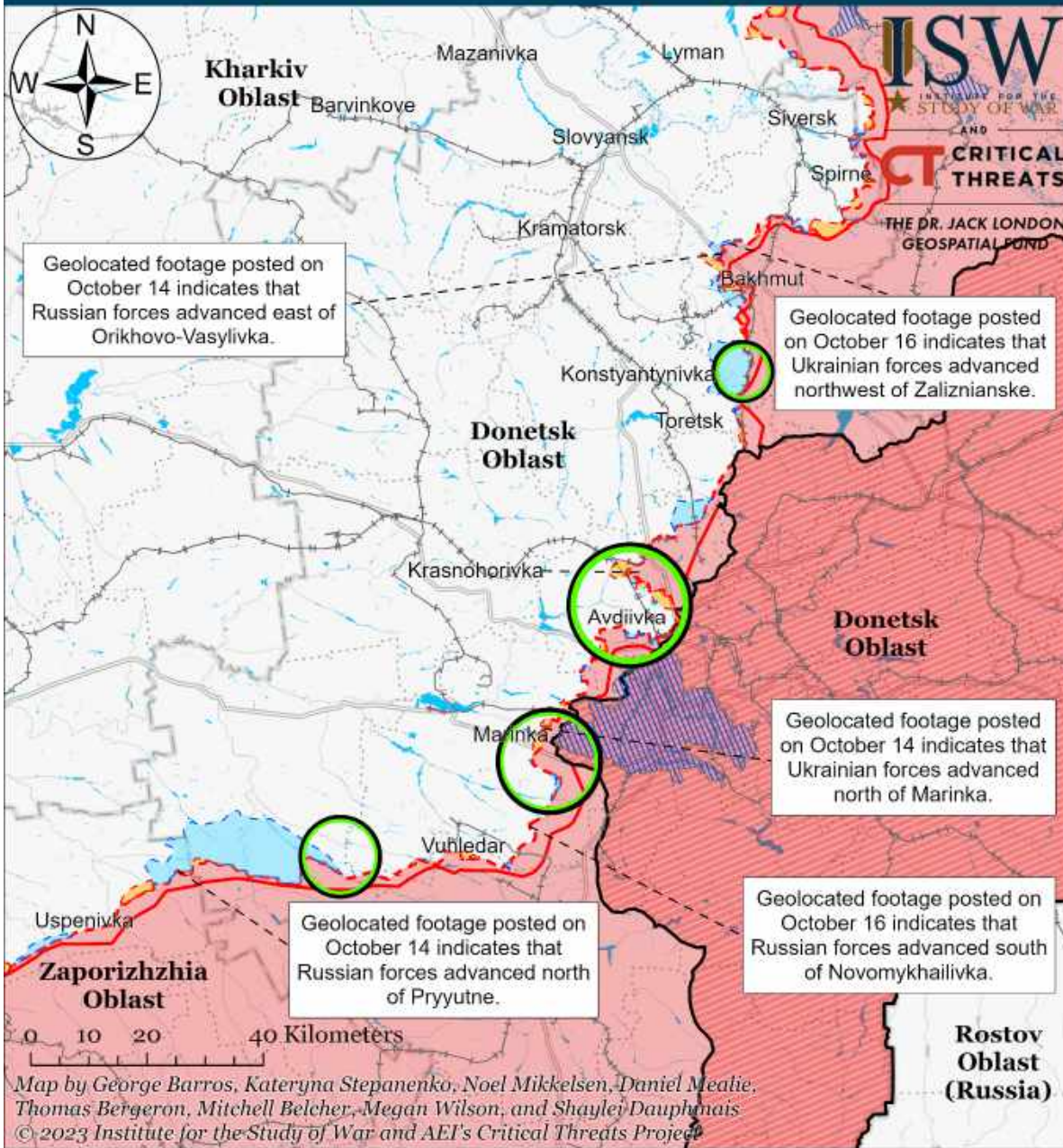


Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Megan Wilson, and Shaylei Dauphinais
 © 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

- Donetsk City Limits
- ▭ Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- ▭ Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- ▭ Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- ▭ Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Russian Field Fortifications

* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of October 17, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Major Railroads
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare

* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions and secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes)

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted unsuccessful limited ground attacks along the administrative border between Donetsk and Zaporizhzhia oblasts on October 17. Russian sources claimed that Russian forces repelled three Ukrainian assaults near Staromayorske (9km south of Velyka Novosilka) and a Ukrainian sabotage and reconnaissance group northeast of Pryyutne (15km southwest of Velyka Novosilka).[58] A Russian news aggregator claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted an assault near Pryyutne on October 16 but did not specify an outcome.[59]

Russian forces conducted limited ground attacks in the Donetsk-Zaporizhzhia Oblast border area on October 17 but did not make any confirmed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled five Russian assaults south of Zolota Nyva (12km southeast of Velyka Novosilka) and Prechystivka (17km southeast of Velyka Novosilka).[60] A Russian milblogger claimed on October 16 that Russian forces attempted to improve their tactical positions near Pryyutne and Novomayorske (18km southeast of Velyka Novosilka).[61]

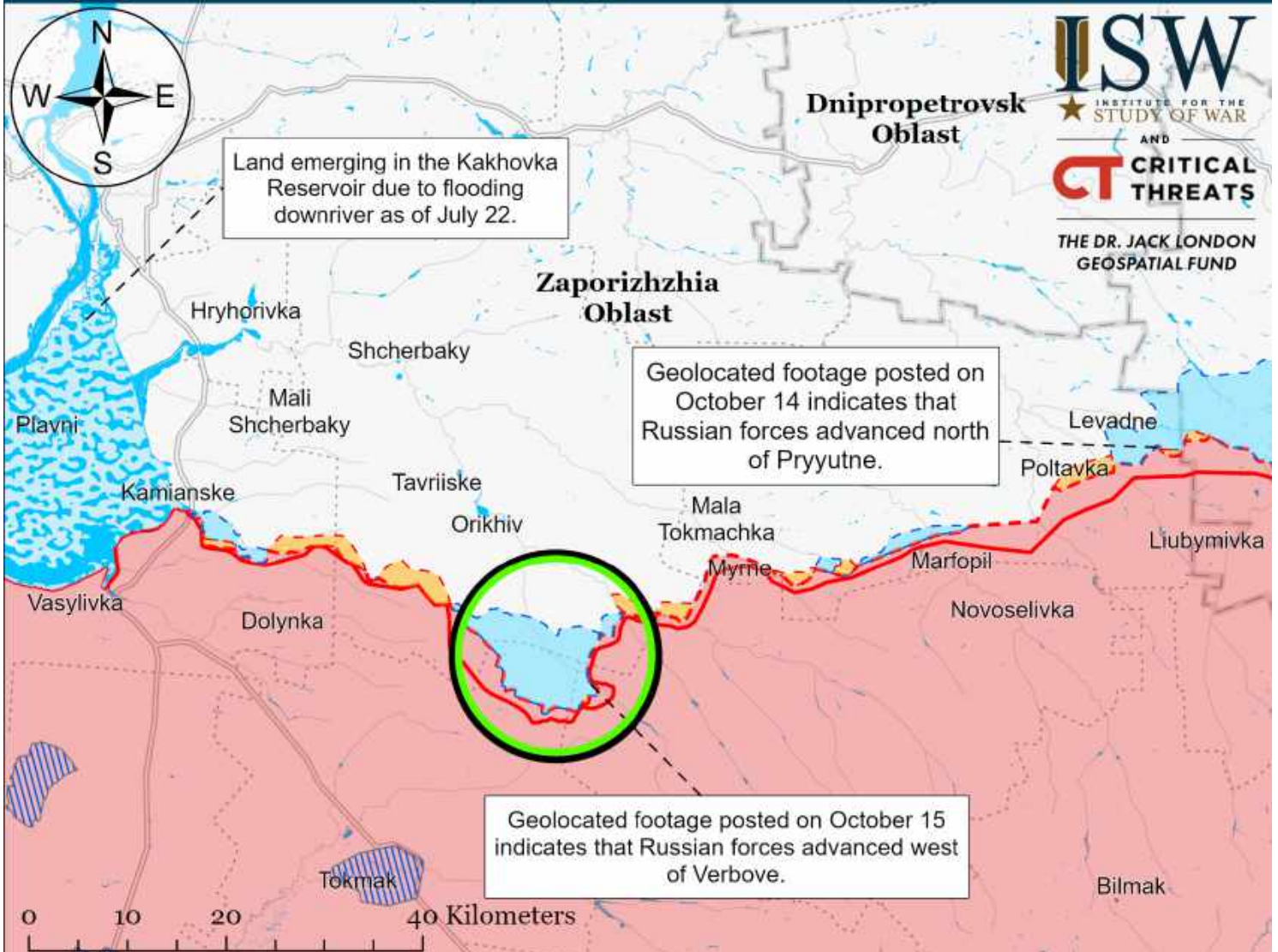


Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast on October 17 and reportedly advanced. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Melitopol (western Zaporizhia Oblast) direction and achieved partial success west of Verbove (10km east of Robotyne).[62] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces with armored vehicle support advanced to an unspecified position northwest of Verbove.[63] A Russian news aggregator claimed on October 16 that Ukrainian forces advanced near Verbove but failed to establish a foothold in the area.[64] Russian sources, including the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD), claimed on October 17 that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian assaults near Robotyne, Kopani (5km northwest of Robotyne), Novopropkivka (2km south of Robotyne), and Verbove.[65]

Russian forces continued counterattacks in western Zaporizhia Oblast on October 17 but did not make any confirmed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks southwest of Novodanylivka (6km north of Robotyne), near Robotyne, and west of Verbove.[66] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces successfully counterattacked between Robotyne and Kopani after repelling a Ukrainian assault in the area.[67] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces counterattacked from Novopropkivka towards Robotyne but did not specify an outcome.[68]



Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhzhia as of October 17, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Megan Wilson, and Shaylei Dauphinais - ©2023 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours | Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory | Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare |
| Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24 | Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory | Emerging land in the Kakhovka Reservoir |
| Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine* | Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives | |

* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian landing attempts on the left bank of Kherson Oblast on October 16 and 17. Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces repelled a Ukrainian landing attempt near Kozachi Laheri (24km east of Kherson City) and Pidstepne (17km east of Kherson City) on October 16 and 17.[69] A Russian milblogger claimed on October 17 that Russian forces also repelled several Ukrainian infantry groups of up to 20 personnel each that attempted to advance from marsh areas north of Oleshky (7km southeast of Kherson City) towards Oleshky and Pishchanivka (16km southeast of Kherson City).[70]



Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces continued to target rear areas in southern Ukraine and occupied Crimea on October 17. Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces struck Skadovsk (60km south of Kherson City) with three HIMARS rockets.[71] Kherson Oblast occupation administration head Vladimir Saldo claimed that Ukrainian forces struck Skadovsk with newly acquired long-range missiles, a likely reference to ATACMS, though ISW has not observed any other reporting that this strike was conducted with ATACMS.[72] Crimean occupation head Sergey Aksyonov claimed that Russian air defenses and electronic warfare (EW) complexes downed eight Ukrainian drones targeting Crimea.[73]

Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts (Russian objective: Expand combat power without conducting general mobilization)

Russia continues to take steps to codify the inclusion of volunteer formations within Rosgvardia. The Russian State Duma adopted the first reading of a bill on October 17 that will allow volunteer formations within Rosgvardia's composition.[74] ISW previously reported that Russian Chairperson of the State Duma Committee on Information Policy Alexander Khinshtein initially proposed this bill on September 21 over the backdrop of increasing reports that Wagner Group personnel are operating alongside Rosgvardia.[75] Rosgvardia has recently undergone several substantial reforms to its composition and recruitment practices following the Wagner Group's June 24 armed rebellion, and the codification of volunteer formations under the auspices of Rosgvardia is likely an effort to absorb and maintain control over some disparate Wagner Group elements while still expanding Rosgvardia's recruitment pool and bolster Russia's domestic security apparatus.[76]

Russian "Vostok" Battalion Commander Alexander Khodakovsky complained about the disparity in the treatment of Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) soldiers and Russian soldiers serving in regular formations.[77] Khodakovsky claimed on October 17 that proxy forces who are not directly part of the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD)'s system, namely units operating as part of the DNR's Ministry of Internal Affairs, do not receive state awards for military service or requisite medical care even though they have been fighting in Donbas for longer than regular Russian forces.[78] Khodakovsky related the story of two DNR soldiers who were meant to receive prosthetics from a hospital affiliated with the Russian MoD but who were then discharged before getting their prosthetics.[79] ISW has previously reported on prevalent tensions between DNR and regular Russian formations which are likely complicating the Russian military command's efforts to integrate DNR and other irregular forces into the regular Russian military.[80]

Activities in Russian-occupied areas (Russian objective: Consolidate administrative control of annexed areas; forcibly integrate Ukrainian citizens into Russian sociocultural, economic, military, and governance systems)

The Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) continues efforts to consolidate control of orthodox diocese in occupied areas of Ukraine. The ROC reported on October 11 that ROC leadership attended a meeting to hear about developments from the ROC's Educational Committee and on the establishment of the Inter-diocene Center for Training of Church Specialists at the Luhansk Diocese.[81] The Ukrainian Resistance Center responded to the ROC's report on October 17 and noted that the shortage of pro-ROC clerics in occupied Luhansk Oblast has forced the ROC to create an "interparochial training center" in the Luhansk and Alchevsk dioceses under Metropolitan Panteleimon (Vasyl Povoroznyuk).[82] Luhansk Oblast occupation head Leonid Pasechnik previously formalized the integration of several Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC) dioceses, including the Luhansk and Alchevsk dioceses, into the ROC on July 15, and the ROC appears to be escalating efforts to control these dioceses and train additional clerics using ROC methods and spiritual doctrine. ISW has previously reported on various manipulations by the ROC in occupied areas of Ukraine as part of a wider Russian campaign of religious prosecution in occupied territories.[83]

Russian Information Operations and Narratives

Russian President Vladimir Putin held bilateral negotiations with Hungarian President Viktor Orban and Mongolian President Ukhnaagiin Khurelsukh in Beijing on October 17. Orban stated that Hungary is committed to saving everything it can in its bilateral relationship with Russia.[84] Putin and Khurelsukh discussed the Power of Siberia-2 gas pipeline, which will transport Russian gas from western Siberia to China through Mongolian territory.[85] Putin is scheduled to meet with Chinese President Xi Jinping on October 17.

The Russian State Duma adopted a bill withdrawing Russia's ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty in its first reading on October 17.[86] The Russian Foreign Ministry reiterated that Russia does not intend to conduct a nuclear test, following previous statements that it will not resume testing unless the US does so first.[87]

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu highlighted the importance of Russian artillery system and ammunition production on October 17 during a meeting at the Russian National Defense Management Center and a visit to a new Almaz-Antey

missile plant in Moscow Oblast.[88] Shoigu stated that the Almaz-Antey missile plant will also produce air defense systems for the Russian military. Shoigu noted the importance of Russian defense industrial base (DIB) enterprises in “quickly replenishing” Russian artillery systems and ammunition stocks.

Significant activity in Belarus (Russian efforts to increase its military presence in Belarus and further integrate Belarus into Russian-favorable frameworks and Wagner Group activity in Belarus)

The Belarusian Ministry of Defense (MoD) stated that units of the 120th Separate Guards Mechanized Brigade, the 6th Separate Guards Mechanized Brigade, and the 19th Separate Guards Mechanized Brigade conducted combat readiness checks and combined arms exercises.[89]

ISW will continue to report daily observed Russian and Belarusian military activity in Belarus as part of ongoing Kremlin efforts to increase their control over Belarus and other Russian actions in Belarus.

Note: ISW does not receive any classified material from any source, uses only publicly available information, and draws extensively on Russian, Ukrainian, and Western reporting and social media as well as commercially available satellite imagery and other geospatial data as the basis for these reports. References to all sources used are provided in the endnotes of each update.

[1] <https://www.cnn.com/2023/10/17/politics/us-ukraine-long-range-atacm-missiles/index.html>; <https://www.wsj.com/world/europe/ukraine-fires-atacms-missile-at-russian-forces-for-the-first-time-3bebcdb1>; <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/10/17/atacms-missile-ukraine-russia-war/>

[2] https://t.me/V_Zelenskiy_official/8241

[3] <https://t.me/vrogov/12539> ; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4082>; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4079> ; <https://t.me/milinfoLive/108803>; https://t.me/grey_zone/21183

[4] <https://www.facebook.com/usofcom/posts/pfbid031YgvDkb7ZKrUzb6bQEKT6Jkp83xULZ8sz7Qf59m4BoKDYTyiqir2KJQEfqisM2Wl>

[5] <https://twitter.com/GirkinGirkin/status/1714269295038070908>; <https://twitter.com/GirkinGirkin/status/1714228679818060148> ; https://t.me/fighter_bomber/14410 <https://t.me/andriyshTime/14298> ; https://t.me/istories_media/3967

[6] <https://twitter.com/vcdgf555/status/1714189725026914678>;
<https://twitter.com/vcdgf555/status/1714190507331772584>

[7] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-june-14-2023>

[8] <https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-july-3-2023> ;
<https://twitter.com/bradyafr/status/1675581368074399745?s=20>

[9] <https://t.me/rybar/53330> ; <https://t.me/milinfoLive/108795>

[10] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar102922>

[11] <https://t.me/rybar/53330> ; <https://t.me/milinfoLive/108795>

[12] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar060823> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar092823>

[13] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar110922> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar111722> ; <https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-july-16>

[14] <https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-july-16>
<https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-july-8>

[15] https://t.me/fighter_bomber/14410 ; <https://t.me/rybar/53330> ; https://t.me/dva_majors/27548 ; <https://t.me/rybar/53326> ; <https://t.me/vysokygovorit/13180> ; <https://t.me/milinfohive/108794>

[16] <https://t.me/milinfohive/108795> ; <https://t.me/milinfohive/108794> ; https://t.me/fighter_bomber/14410 ; <https://t.me/rybar/53330> ; https://t.me/dva_majors/27548 ; <https://t.me/rybar/53326> ; <https://t.me/vysokygovorit/13180> ; <https://t.me/milinfohive/108794>

[17] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar092223>

[18] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid033r2xdD7w6ZqbfmVozPjgXEGuSHPhTsSDCH7qH1tAPSG4M52QAwM8gTKop1MsxjTvl>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02xQdq5uSoxyYfm4G3yS2JiVSYcaoQAZ4DvrDL5D2KLXQnckY8mQUdKiuYnuWXumdVl>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02JrSWUvtyURD75rz3WNgPxxvjYt5ZQxMBNTDoXocENDoV2Jhj3JdYCEgqno9EKYSl>

[19] https://t.me/BTGR_NEVSKIY/605; <https://twitter.com/foosint/status/1714280626214560022>; <https://twitter.com/foosint/status/1714311323771609478>

[20] <https://www.voanews.com/a/all-31-abrams-tanks-in-ukraine-us-military-confirms-to-voa/7313918.html#:~:text=The%20U.S.%20military%20has%20said,16%2C%202023.&text=All%2031%20U.S.%20made%20M1A1,according%20to%20the%20U.S.%20military.>

[21] <https://www.voanews.com/a/all-31-abrams-tanks-in-ukraine-us-military-confirms-to-voa/7313918.html#:~:text=The%20U.S.%20military%20has%20said,16%2C%202023.&text=All%2031%20U.S.-made%20M1A1,according%20to%20the%20U.S.%20military>

[22] https://t.me/mod_russia/31564 ; <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/55084> ; https://t.me/boris_rozhin/101124

[23] https://t.me/mod_russia/31564 ; <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/55084> ; https://t.me/boris_rozhin/101124

[24] <https://iz dot ru/1590752/2023-10-17/voennyi-ekspert-rasskazal-o-preimushchestvakh-novoi-ognemetnoi-sistemy-tosochka>; <https://ria dot ru/20231017/tosochka-1903223411.html>; <https://www.rbc dot ru/rbcfreenews/652e0deb9a79470085052e07>

[25] https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/October%2012%2C%202023%20Russian%20Orbat_Final.pdf

[26] https://t.me/romanov_92/41895

[27] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar082923> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar082823> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar082723> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar082623> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar082523> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar093023>

[28] https://t.me/romanov_92/41895

[29] <https://tass dot ru/politika/19038615>

[30] <https://tass.ru/politika/19038615>

[31] <https://x.com/EjShahid/status/1714249277449371784?s=20>; <https://t.me/khornegroup/848>; <https://t.me/russianocontext/935> ; https://x.com/bayraktar_1love/status/1714263123916366046?s=20

[32] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid033r2xdD7w6ZqbfmVozPjgXEGuSHPhTsSDCH7qH1tAPSG4M52QAwM8gTKop1MsxjTvl>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02xQdq5uSoxyYfm4G3yS2JiVSYcaoQAZ4DvrDL5D2KLXQnckY8mQUdKiuYnuWXumdVl>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02JrSWUvtyURD75rz3WNgPxxvjYt5ZQxMBNTDoXocENDoV2Jhj3JdYCEgqno9EKYSl>

[33] <https://armyinform.com dot ua/2023/10/17/vorog-namagayetsya-zdobuty-vygidni-pozyciyi-do-nastannya-holodiv/> ; <https://t.me/luhanskaVTSA/14391>

[34] https://t.me/boris_rozhin/101032 ; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/51347>; <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/55063>; <https://t.me/rybar/53313>; <https://t.me/readovkanews/67896>

[35] <https://t.me/rybar/53338>

[36] https://t.me/mod_russia/31566 ; https://t.me/mod_russia/31578

[37] <https://t.me/rybar/53338>; <https://t.me/batalyon15/3146>
; https://t.me/dva_majors/27527; <https://t.me/rybar/53313>

[38] https://t.me/BTGR_NEVSKIY/605; <https://twitter.com/foosint/status/1714280626214560022>;
<https://twitter.com/foosint/status/1714311323771609478>

[39] https://t.me/mod_russia/31566 ; https://t.me/mod_russia/31580

[40] <https://t.me/rybar/53313>

[41] https://t.me/boris_rozhin/101032 ; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/51347>

[42] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1318>

[43] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid033r2xdD7w6ZqbfmVozPjgXEGuSHPhTsSDCH7qH1tAPsg4M52QAwM8gTKop1MsxjTvl> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02xQdq5uSoxyYfm4G3yS2JiVSYcaoQAZ4DvrDL5D2KLXQnckY8mQUdKiuYnuWXumdVl>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02JrSWUvtyURD75rz3WNgPxxvjYt5ZQxMBNTDoXocENDoV2Jhj3JdYCEgqno9EKYSI>

[44] <https://armyinform.com dot ua/2023/10/17/syly-oborony-prodovzhuyut-nastupalni-diyi-na-pivdennomu-napryamku-poblyzu-bahmuta/>

[45] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1318>

[46] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid033r2xdD7w6ZqbfmVozPjgXEGuSHPhTsSDCH7qH1tAPsg4M52QAwM8gTKop1MsxjTvl> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02xQdq5uSoxyYfm4G3yS2JiVSYcaoQAZ4DvrDL5D2KLXQnckY8mQUdKiuYnuWXumdVl>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02JrSWUvtyURD75rz3WNgPxxvjYt5ZQxMBNTDoXocENDoV2Jhj3JdYCEgqno9EKYSI>

[47] <https://armyinform.com dot ua/2023/10/17/intensyvni-sturmi-nastupalnih-dij-voroga-poblyzu-avdiyivky-znyzylasya-oleksandr-shtupun/> ; <https://suspilne dot media/595657-intensivnist-boiv-navkolo-avdiivki-znizilas-rf-moze-gotuvati-novi-sturmi-morozov/>

[48] <https://suspilne dot media/595657-intensivnist-boiv-navkolo-avdiivki-znizilas-rf-moze-gotuvati-novi-sturmi-morozov/>

[49] https://t.me/dva_majors/27527

[50] <https://t.me/milinfoolive/108810>

[51] <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4078>

[52] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15832>

[53] <https://twitter.com/GirkinGirkin/status/1713971421318156616> ; https://t.me/vozhak_Z/451

[54] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1319>

[55] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid033r2xdD7w6ZqbfmVozPjgXEGuSHPhTsSDCH7qH1tAPsg4M52QAwM8gTKop1MsxjTvl> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02xQdq5uSoxyYfm4G3yS2JiVSYcaoQAZ4DvrDL5D2KLXQnckY8mQUdKiuYnuWXumdVl>

aoQAZ4DvrDL5D2KLXQnckY8mQUdKiuYnuWXumdVl; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02JrSWUvtyURD75rz3WNgPxxvjYt5ZQxMBNTDoXocENDoV2Jhj3JdYCEgqno9EKYSI>

[56] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15832>

[57] <https://www.facebook.com/PresscentrTavria/posts/pfbid0jhU8d7tEuF4uQatdXu2ZpHcTR5JgYVorPi8d1SrjCKRFP CtRwuERG5tHbU8T7YBWL>

[58] https://t.me/voin_dv/5499 ; <https://t.me/vrogov/12535>

[59] <https://t.me/readovkanews/67896>

[60] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02xQdq5uSoxyYfm4G3yS2JiVSYcaoQAZ4DvrDL5D2KLXQnckY8mQUdKiuYnuWXumdVl>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02JrSWUvtyURD75rz3WNgPxxvjYt5ZQxMBNTDoXocENDoV2Jhj3JdYCEgqno9EKYSI> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid033r2xdD7w6ZqbfmVozPjgXEGuSHPhTsSDCH7qH1tAPSG4M52QAwM8gTKop1MsxjTvl>

[61] https://t.me/boris_rozhin/101032 ; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/51347>

[62] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02xQdq5uSoxyYfm4G3yS2JiVSYcaoQAZ4DvrDL5D2KLXQnckY8mQUdKiuYnuWXumdVl>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02JrSWUvtyURD75rz3WNgPxxvjYt5ZQxMBNTDoXocENDoV2Jhj3JdYCEgqno9EKYSI>

[63] <https://t.me/rybar/53318>

[64] <https://t.me/readovkanews/67896>

[65] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15832> ; https://t.me/boris_rozhin/101066 ; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4070> ; https://t.me/mod_russia/31566 ; https://t.me/mod_russia/31582 ; <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/55094>

[66] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid033r2xdD7w6ZqbfmVozPjgXEGuSHPhTsSDCH7qH1tAPSG4M52QAwM8gTKop1MsxjTvl> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02xQdq5uSoxyYfm4G3yS2JiVSYcaoQAZ4DvrDL5D2KLXQnckY8mQUdKiuYnuWXumdVl>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02JrSWUvtyURD75rz3WNgPxxvjYt5ZQxMBNTDoXocENDoV2Jhj3JdYCEgqno9EKYSI>

[67] <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/55094>

[68] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15832>

[69] <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4066> ; <https://t.me/rybar/53313>

[70] <https://t.me/rybar/53336>

[71] https://t.me/basurin_e/6320 ; https://t.me/boris_rozhin/101115 ; https://t.me/SALDO_VGA/1334

[72] https://t.me/SALDO_VGA/1334 ;

[73] <https://t.me/Aksenov82/3313>

[74] <https://t.me/milinfo/108808> ; https://t.me/RDS_Official_channel/226 ; <https://tass.ru/armiya-i-opk/19039447>; https://t.me/new_militarycolumnist/119869; https://t.me/batalyon_vostok/222

[75] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-21-2023>

[76] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar091123>; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar071723>

[77] https://t.me/aleksandr_skif/2958

- [78] https://t.me/aleksandr_skif/2958
- [79] https://t.me/aleksandr_skif/2958
- [80] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar100823>
- [81] <http://www.patriarchia dot ru/db/text/6066337.html>
- [82] <https://sprotyv.mod dot gov.ua/okupanty-planuyut-vidkryty-tsentri-pidgotovky-ruchnyh-svyashhenykyv-na-tot/>
- [83] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-april-9-2023>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-july-15-2023>; <https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-july-6-2023>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-15-2023>
- [84] <http://kremlin dot ru/events/president/news/72516>
- [85] <http://kremlin dot ru/events/president/news/72519> ; <https://tass dot ru/ekonomika/19029331>
- [86] <https://www.rbc dot ru/politics/17/10/2023/652e56919a794758b0285ace> ; <https://t.me/readovkanews/67904> ; <https://tass dot com/politics/1691773>
- [87] <https://t.me/readovkanews/67877> ; <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/10/17/russia-moves-to-revoke-nuclear-test-ban-treaty-a82793> ; <https://ria dot ru/20231016/isyptaniya-1903002199.html>
- [88] https://t.me/mod_russia/31542 ; <https://t.me/readovkanews/67905> ; https://t.me/mod_russia/31568 ; https://t.me/mod_russia/31575 ; https://t.me/mod_russia/31576 ; https://t.me/mod_russia/31577
- [89] <https://t.me/modmilby/32979> ; <https://t.me/modmilby/32966> ; <https://t.me/modmilby/32976> ; <https://t.me/modmilby/32966> ; <https://t.me/modmilby/32969> ; <https://t.me/modmilby/32966>

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, October 16, 2023

Karolina Hird, Angelica Evans, Grace Mappes, Christina Harward, and Mason Clark

October 16, 2023, 6pm ET

Click [here](#) to see ISW's interactive map of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

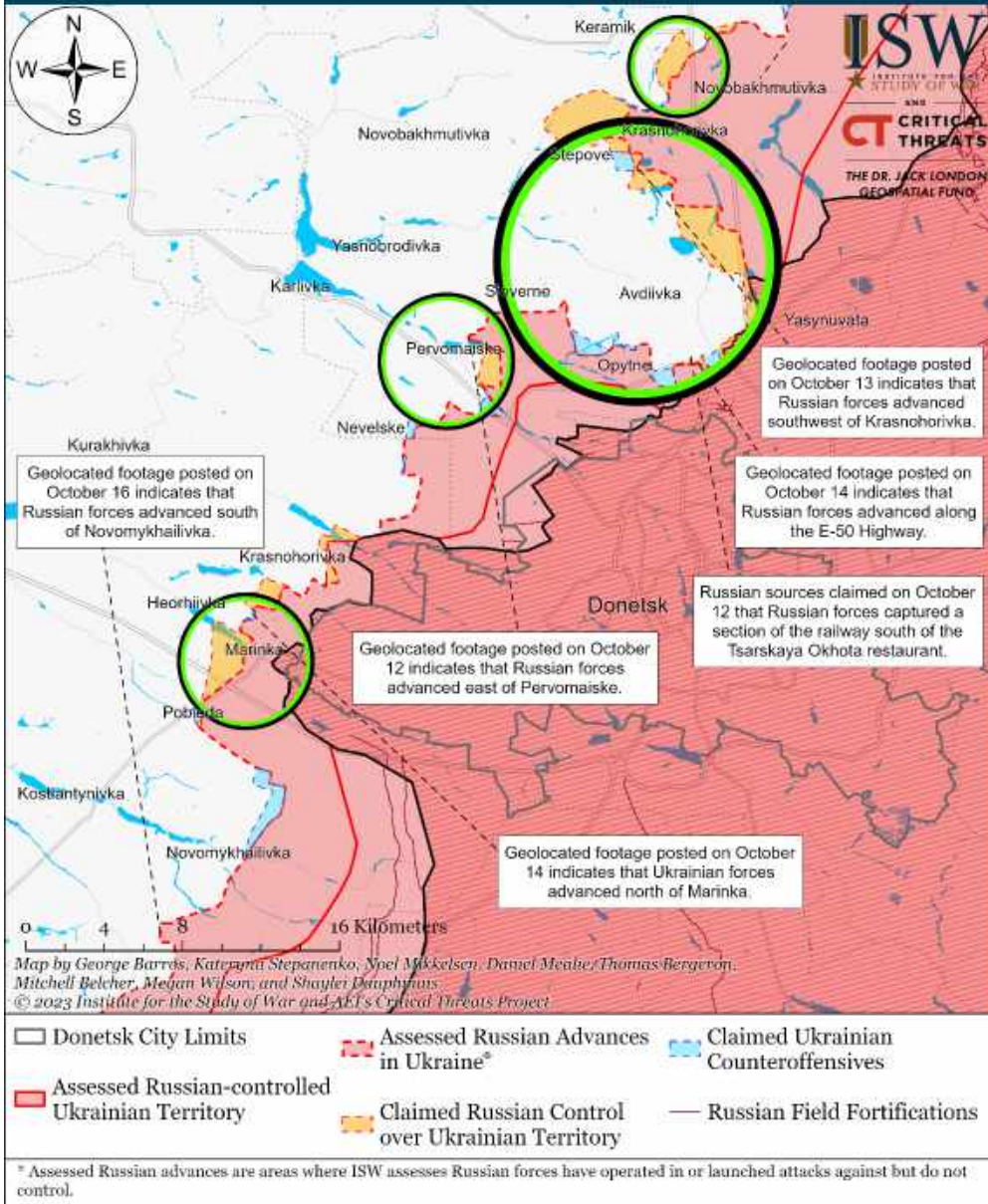
Click [here](#) to access ISW's archive of interactive time-lapse maps of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. These maps complement the static control-of-terrain map that ISW produces daily by showing a dynamic frontline. ISW will update this time-lapse map archive monthly.

Note: The data cut-off for this product was 1:30pm ET on October 16. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the October 17 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Russia likely deployed elements of at least two Central Military District (CMD) brigades to reinforce offensive operations by Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) forces on the Avdiivka front. A Ukrainian military observer reported on October 16 that three Russian brigades — the DNR's 114th Motorized Rifle Brigade (MRB) and the CMD's 15th and 21st MRBs (both of the 2nd Combined Arms Army [2nd CAA]) — have been involved in recent attacks on Avdiivka alongside various scattered DNR elements, while Russian forces are holding the CMD's 30th MRB in tactical reserve.[1] Elements of the CMD, particularly of the 2nd CAA, have been active along the Svatove-Kreminna line until recently, and the newly formed 25th CAA likely relieved them along the Svatove-Kreminna line.[2] 2nd CAA elements have primarily conducted defensive operations along the Svatove-Kreminna line for the last several months and have therefore likely had more time to rest and reconstitute before deploying to a more challenging sector of the frontline, which accounts in part for recent Russian advances in the previously stagnant Avdiivka sector of the front.

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Avdiivka direction on October 16 and recently made some gains, albeit at a relatively slower pace than in the initial attacks. Geolocated footage posted on October 16 shows that Russian forces have marginally advanced past the E50 road about 3km south of Avdiivka.[3] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled a total of 22 Russian attacks in the Avdiivka direction in the past day, notably fewer than the 30 reported attacks on October 15.[4] Russian sources noted that Russian forces have increased the intensity of air and artillery strikes on the settlement in order to compensate for slow ground maneuvers, which are complicated by heavy Ukrainian fortifications surrounding Avdiivka.[5] During a meeting on the operational situation in Ukraine on October 16, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu claimed that Russian forces have improved their tactical positions in unspecified areas and that the Russian "active defense" along the front, including near Avdiivka, is prohibiting Ukrainian advances.[6]

Assessed Control of Terrain near Donetsk City as of October 16, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations near Bakhmut and in western Zaporizhia Oblast on October 16. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces conducted offensive operations in the Melitopol (western Zaporizhia Oblast) and Bakhmut directions.[7] Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted assaults near Avdiivka and on Verbove's western and northwestern outskirts (10km east of Robotyne or 18km southwest of Orikhiv).[8] Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces are within 200 to 300 meters of Russian positions west of Verbove.[9]

Kremlin-appointed Children’s Rights Commissioner Maria Lvova-Belova reiterated statements admitting that Russia deported millions of Ukrainians – including 700,000 children – to Russia since the start of Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine, as a Qatari-mediated deal returned four children from Russia to Ukraine. Lvova-Belova claimed in a report published on October 15 that Russia has “accepted” about 4.8 million Ukrainians, including 700,000 children, since February 2022 and that Russian authorities have placed 380 Ukrainian orphans into foster care in Russia between April and October 2022.[10] Lvova-Belova also attempted to discredit information about Russia’s deportation of Ukrainian children and claimed instead that Ukrainian authorities act “against the interests of children.”[11] *The Washington Post* reported on October 16 that four children ranging from two to seventeen years old have returned or will return to Ukraine from Russia after Ukraine asked Qatar to mediate negotiations on the matter.[12] An official source told *The Washington Post* that more Ukrainian children may be returned in the future as part of the Qatari-mediated negotiations but that the process has been complicated by Russia providing a list of only hundreds of Ukrainian children currently in Russia while Ukraine has identified thousands of deported children. International humanitarian law defines the forced transfer of civilians to the territory of an occupying power as “deportation,” and ISW continues to assess that Russian authorities are conducting a large-scale campaign to deport Ukrainians to Russia.[13]

Some Russian milbloggers continue to complain about the alleged restriction of information about Russian military failures. A Russian milblogger criticized an unspecified associate of Russian Lieutenant General Andrey Sychevoy, who was reportedly recently dismissed from a command position for military failures near Bakhmut, for causing Russian forces (presumably near Bakhmut) to suffer 1,500 casualties in September 2023.[14] The milblogger also criticized the broader Russian military command for communication failures and forcing injured personnel back into combat.[15] The milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces have crossed the railway line south of Bakhmut in some places and complained that only one major milblogger has discussed this issue, underlining the fact that many milbloggers restrict their presentation of negative information about Russian capabilities.[16] Another milblogger, who previously claimed to censor all but 10-20 percent of the “sad” information they receive, claimed that the first milblogger’s complaints provide a glimpse into the 80-90 percent of unreported information, yet criticized other Russian milbloggers for consistently claiming that the Ukrainian counteroffensive has failed.[17]

Russian forces conducted a drone and missile strike against Ukrainian rear areas on the night of October 15-16. Ukrainian military sources reported that Russian forces launched five Kh-59 cruise missiles, one Iskander ballistic missile in eastern and southern Ukraine, and 12 Shahed-131/136 drones in western Ukraine.[18] Ukrainian air defense reportedly destroyed two of the Kh-59s and 11 Shahed drones.[19] Ukrainian officials reported explosions near Myrhorod, Poltava Oblast, and in Kirovohrad Oblast.[20] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that one strike destroyed a Ukrainian communication center at the Myrhorod airfield in Poltava Oblast.[21]

A new Russian procedure restricting the border checkpoints that Ukrainians can use to enter Russia from third countries came into force on October 16, effectively only allowing Ukrainians to enter Russia from third countries through the Sheremetyevo airport in Moscow. The new procedure only allows Ukrainians aged 14 and older to enter Russia from third countries through the Ludonka automobile checkpoint from Latvia and Sheremetyevo airport in Moscow.[22] Latvia announced on October 12 that it would close its side of the Ludonka

checkpoint beginning on October 16.[23] ISW previously assessed that Russia implemented this new border crossing procedure likely in response to continued concern over the security of Russian border regions.[24] The new procedure does not apply to Ukrainians entering Russia from occupied Ukrainian territories or Ukrainians under the age of 14 traveling with a legal guardian.[25]

A group of Russian lawyers appears to be challenging the Kremlin’s precariously crafted veneer of legality surrounding the Russian judicial system, calling for a strike three days after Russian authorities arrested four lawyers on extremism charges. A group of Russian lawyers published a petition encouraging members of the Russian Federal and Regional Chambers of Lawyers and other public lawyer associations to strike from all types of legal proceedings from October 25 to 28 in response to commonplace intimidation of lawyers in the Russian judicial system.[26] The petition states that Russian authorities often ignore violations of the professional rights of lawyers and threaten violence against them on “trumped-up administrative and criminal charges.”[27] The petition also argues that Russian judges increasingly abuse their powers and accuse Russian law enforcement officers of perpetrating crimes against lawyers. The petition states that “sophisticated methods of prosecuting lawyers for their professional activities on far-fetched administrative and criminal charges” have become established practices by Russian law enforcement agencies and courts. This petition comes three days after Russian authorities arrested four lawyers, including three of imprisoned Russian opposition figure Alexei Navalny’s lawyers, on extremism charges on October 13.[28] The Russian lawyers calling for a strike appear unwilling to further tolerate the Kremlin’s weaponization of the Russian judicial system, challenging the Kremlin’s veneer of legality and legitimacy in Russian institutions that are intended to provide cover for Russian President Vladimir Putin’s authoritarian and corrupt rule.[29]

Key Takeaways:

- **Russia likely deployed elements of at least two Central Military District (CMD) brigades to reinforce offensive operations by Donetsk People’s Republic (DNR) forces on the Avdiivka front.**
- **Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations near Bakhmut and in western Zaporizhia Oblast on October 16.**
- **A new Russian procedure restricting the border checkpoints that Ukrainians can use to enter Russia from third countries came into force on October 16, effectively only allowing Ukrainians to enter Russia from third countries through the Sheremetyevo airport in Moscow.**
- **A group of Russian lawyers appear to be challenging the Kremlin’s precariously crafted veneer of legality surrounding the Russian judicial system, calling for a strike three days after Russian authorities arrested four lawyers on extremism charges.**
- **Russian forces conducted offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line, in the Bakhmut direction, near Avdiivka, southwest of Donetsk City, in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area, and in western Zaporizhia Oblast and advanced in some areas.**
- **The Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) reported further details on ongoing North Korean weapons shipments to Russia on October 16.**

- Senior Russian officials reiterated boilerplate narratives about the Ukrainian counteroffensive and the Israel-Hamas war during a Russian Security Council meeting on October 16 likely to deter Western support for Ukraine.



We do not report in detail on Russian war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We will continue to evaluate and report on the effects of

these criminal activities on the Ukrainian military and the Ukrainian population and specifically on combat in Ukrainian urban areas. We utterly condemn these Russian violations of the laws of armed conflict, Geneva Conventions, and humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

- Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine (comprised of two subordinate main efforts)
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and encircle northern Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis
- Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts
- Activities in Russian-occupied areas
- Russian Information Operations and Narratives

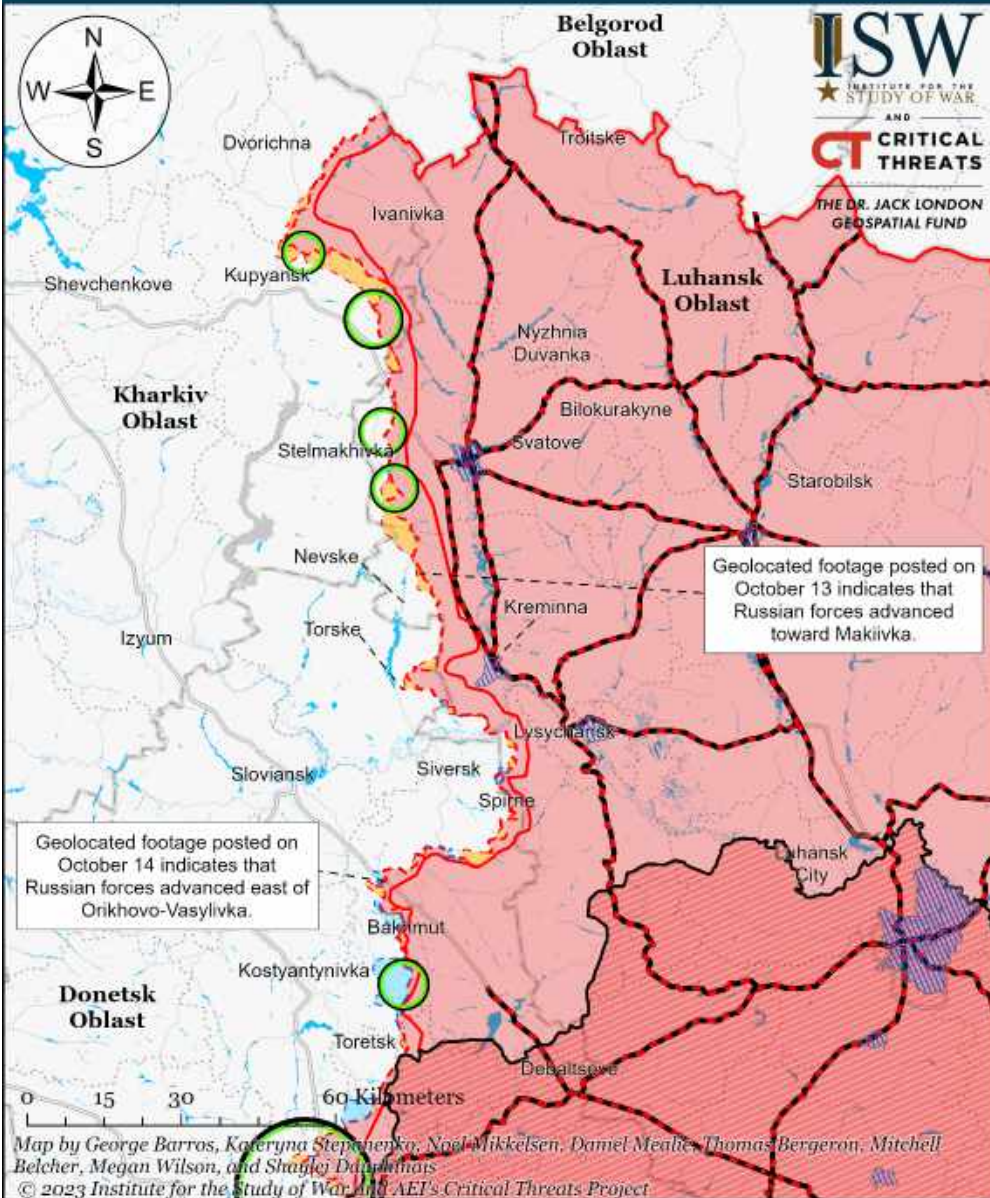
Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Luhansk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and northern Donetsk Oblast)

Russian forces continued offensive operations on the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on October 16 but did not make confirmed advances. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces captured new positions near Krokmalne (25km southeast of Kupyansk) and Stepova Novosilka (17km southeast of Kupyansk) but noted that Russian forces have not achieved significant advances in the Kupyansk direction.[30] Other Russian milbloggers reported continued Russian offensive operations near Synkivka (8km northeast of Kupyansk), Lyman Pershyi (12km northeast of Kupyansk), Makiivka (22km northwest of Kreminna), and in the Serebryanske forest area (11km south of Kreminna).[31] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks near Synkivka, Ivanivka (19km southeast of Kupyansk), Stelmakhivka (12km northwest of Svatove), and Nadiya (20km west of Svatove).[32] Ukrainian military analyst Petro Chernyk stated that Russian forces are concentrating 100,000 personnel in the Kupyansk-Lyman direction to distract Ukrainian forces from ongoing offensive operations near Bakhmut.[33] Chernyk stated that Russian forces may achieve partial success in the Kupyansk-Lyman direction but will need to commit significant forces to capture territory.

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted offensive operations on the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on October 16 but did not advance. The Russian MoD claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Synkivka, Ivanivka, Novoyehorivka (16km southwest of Svatove), Makiivka, Dibrova (7km southwest of Kreminna), and the Serebryanske forest area.[34] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces periodically conduct unsuccessful attacks in the Kupyansk area.[35]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of October 16, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Russian Ground Lines of Communication
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare

* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

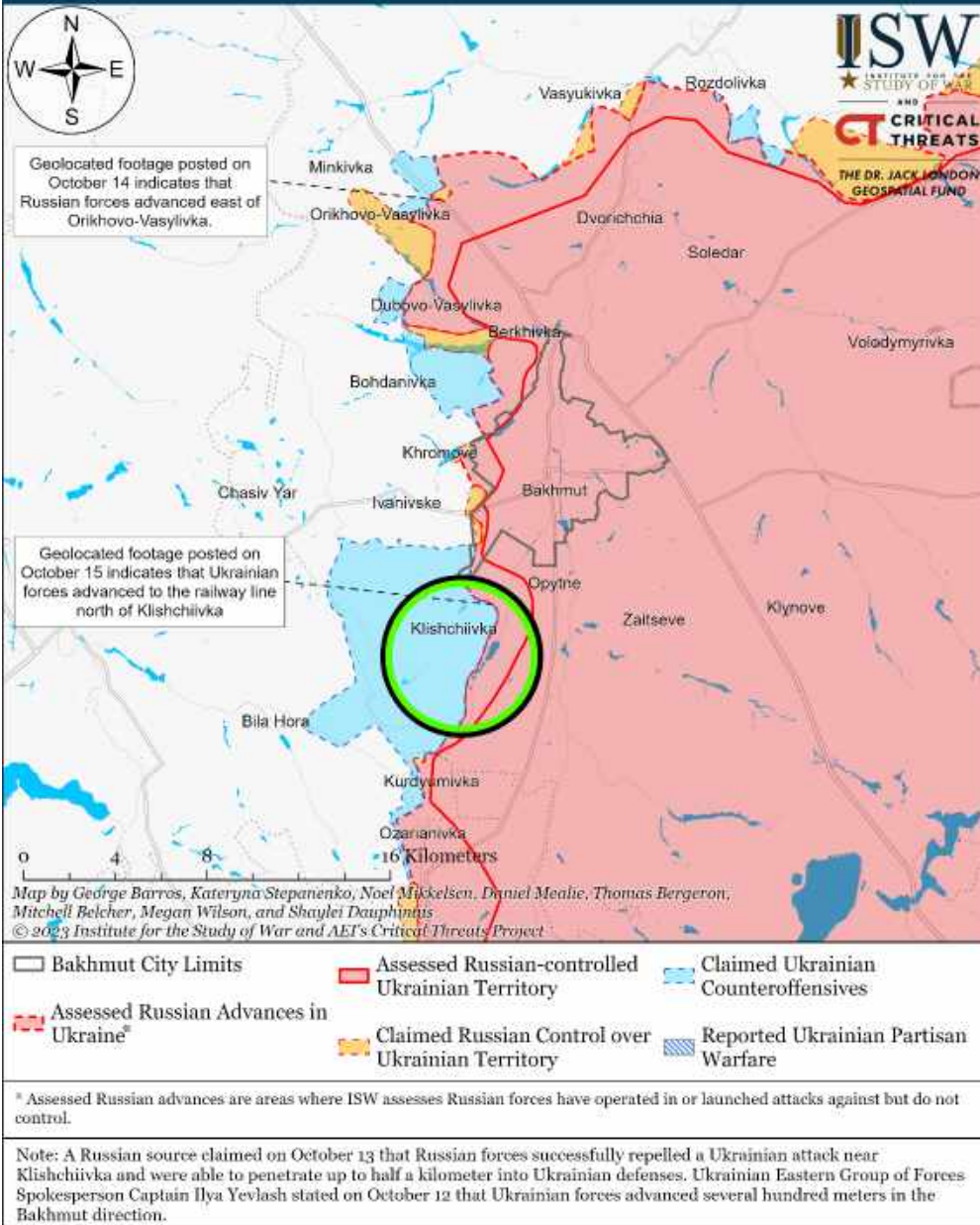
Note: A Russian source claimed on October 13 that Russian forces repelled a Ukrainian attack near Klishchiivka and were able to penetrate up to half a kilometer into Ukrainian defenses.

Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Donetsk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)

Russian forces continued limited counterattacks in the Bakhmut direction on October 16 but did not make any confirmed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks southwest of Bakhmut near Klishchiivka (6km southwest) and Andriivka (8km southwest).[36] Ukrainian Eastern Grouping of Forces Spokesperson Captain Ilya Yevlash noted that there were seven meeting engagements in this direction over the past day.[37] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces attempted to regain lost positions near Klishchiivka and Andriivka but were unsuccessful.[38]

Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations in the Bakhmut direction on October 16 but did not make any confirmed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff noted that Ukrainian forces continued offensive actions near Bakhmut but did not specify the outcome of the Ukrainian attacks.[39]

Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of October 16, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



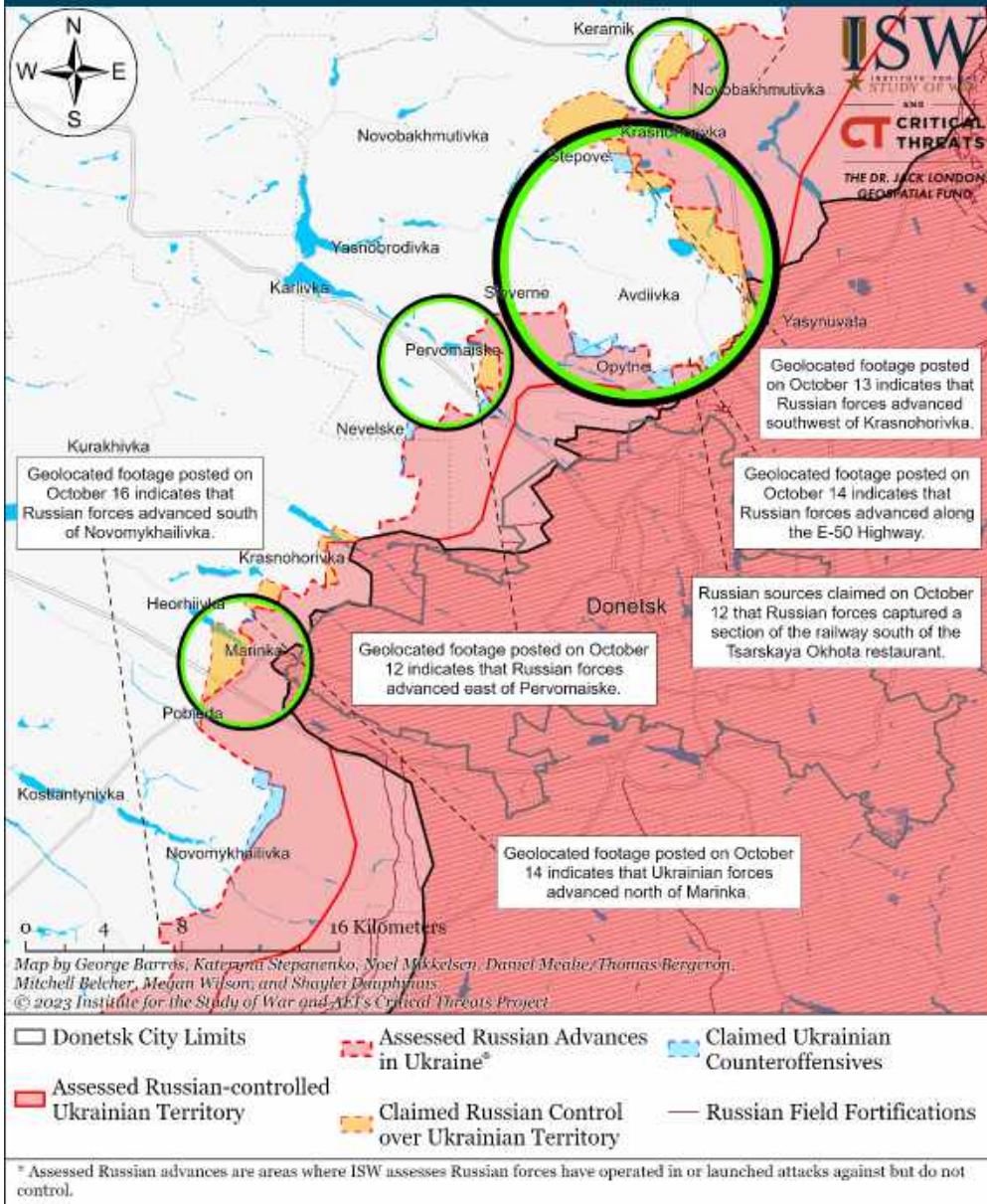
Russian forces continued offensive operations near Avdiivka on October 16 and made confirmed advances on the northern outskirts of Donetsk City. Geolocated footage posted on October 16 shows that Russian forces have marginally advanced past the E50 road about 3km south of Avdiivka.[40] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces continue attacking the fortified area around Avdiivka while shelling Ukrainian logistics routes into the settlement.[41] One milblogger claimed that Russian forces continue ground attacks in several directions in an attempt to encircle Avdiivka from Sieverne (southwest), the Opytne-Spartak area (south), and Krasnohorivka (north).[42] The milblogger additionally claimed that Russian forces marginally advanced near

Stepove (7km northwest of Avdiivka) but failed to advance toward Keramik (10km northwest of Avdiivka).[43] Russian sources additionally presented conflicting claims about the status of the waste heap area northwest of Avdiivka, with some claiming that Russian forces do not control the area at all, others claiming that battles are ongoing near the waste heap and that Russian forces are advancing into the contested "grey zone," and some sources claiming that Russian forces completely control the waste heap.[44] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks near Avdiivka, Keramik, Stepove, Tonenke (5km west of Avdiivka), Sieverne (5km west of Avdiivka), and Pervomaiske (10km southwest of Avdiivka).[45] A Ukrainian reserve officer noted that Russian forces are increasingly resorting to heavy air and artillery strikes on infrastructure within Avdiivka due to heavy Ukrainian fortifications around the settlement that are making it difficult for Russian troops to advance.[46]

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted unsuccessful counterattacks near Avdiivka on October 16.[47] One milblogger reported that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attempted to launch attacks from positions in the Avdiivka Coke Plant in northwestern Avdiivka.[48]

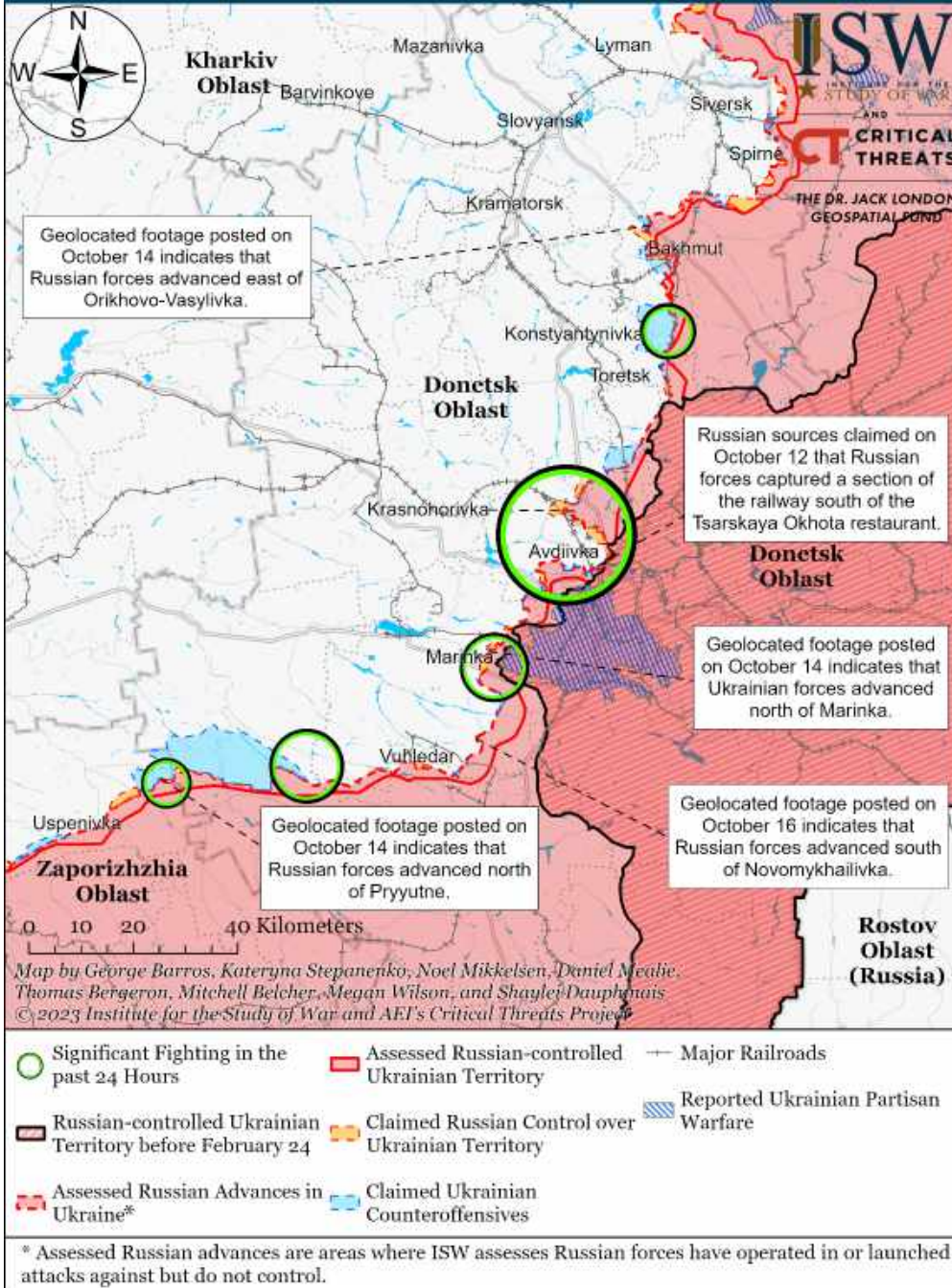
Russian forces continued offensive operations southwest of Donetsk City on October 16 and have recently advanced. Geolocated footage posted on October 13 indicates that Russian forces control Stepne, a settlement about 23km southwest of Donetsk City.[49] Additional geolocated footage posted on October 16 shows that Russian forces have advanced up to a tree line south of Novomykhailivka, 20km southwest of Donetsk City.[50] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled numerous Russian attacks near Marinka (on the southwestern outskirts of Donetsk City).[51] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces are conducting "powerful" attacks on Ukrainian positions in Marinka.[52]

Assessed Control of Terrain near Donetsk City as of October 16, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Ukrainian forces did not conduct any claimed or confirmed ground attacks southwest of Donetsk City on October 16.

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of October 16, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

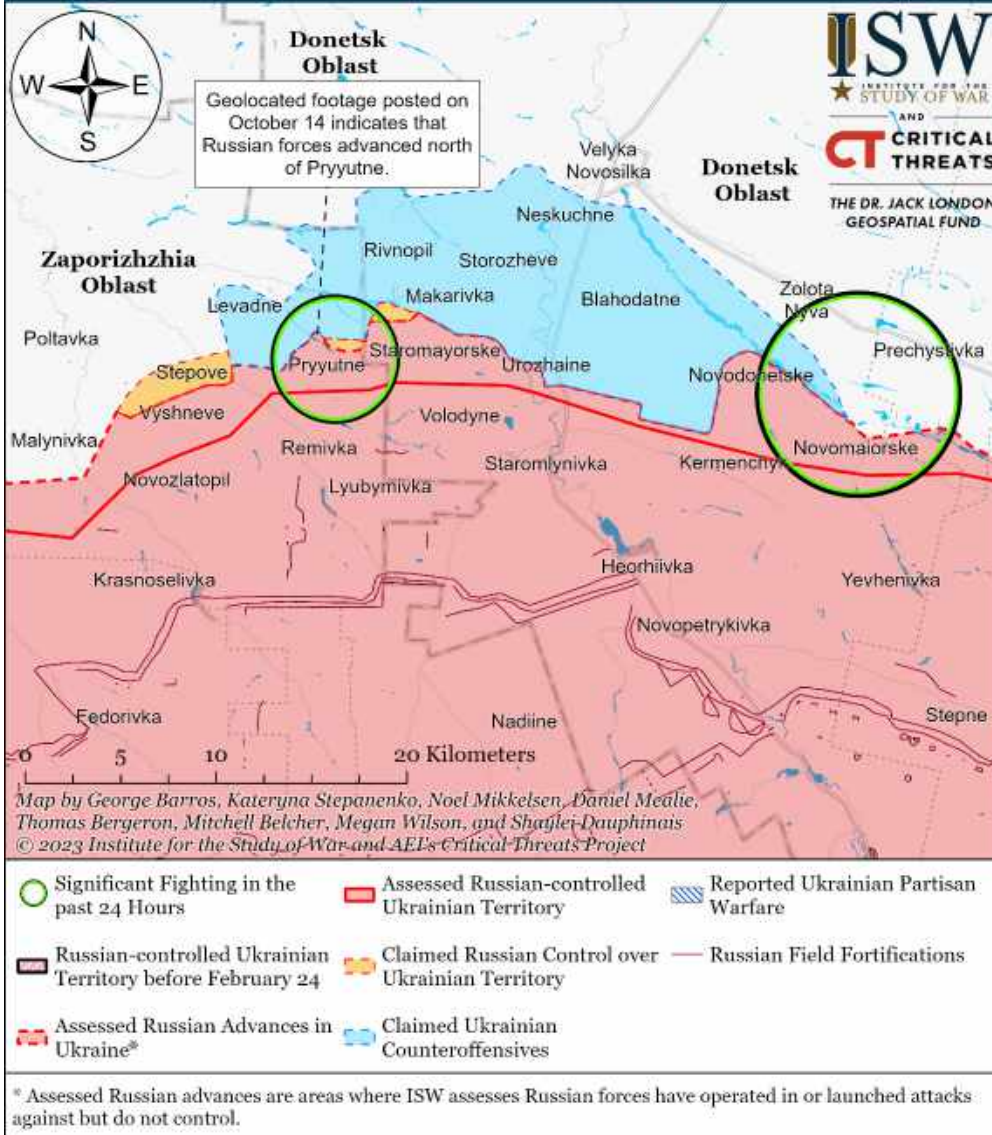


Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions and secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes)

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on October 16. Russian Eastern Grouping of Forces Spokesperson Oleg Chekhov claimed on October 16 that Ukrainian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks near Staromayorske (9km south of Velyka Novosilka).[53] A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Pryutne (16km southwest of Velyka Novosilka).[54] The Russian “Vostok” Battalion, reportedly fighting near Novodonetske (12km southeast of Velyka Novosilka), claimed that their section of the front was quiet on the night of October 15 to 16.[55] A Russian news aggregator claimed that Russian forces repelled a Ukrainian attack near Staromayorske on October 15.[56] A prominent Russian milblogger claimed on October 15 that positional battles occurred near Pryutne over the past week.[57]

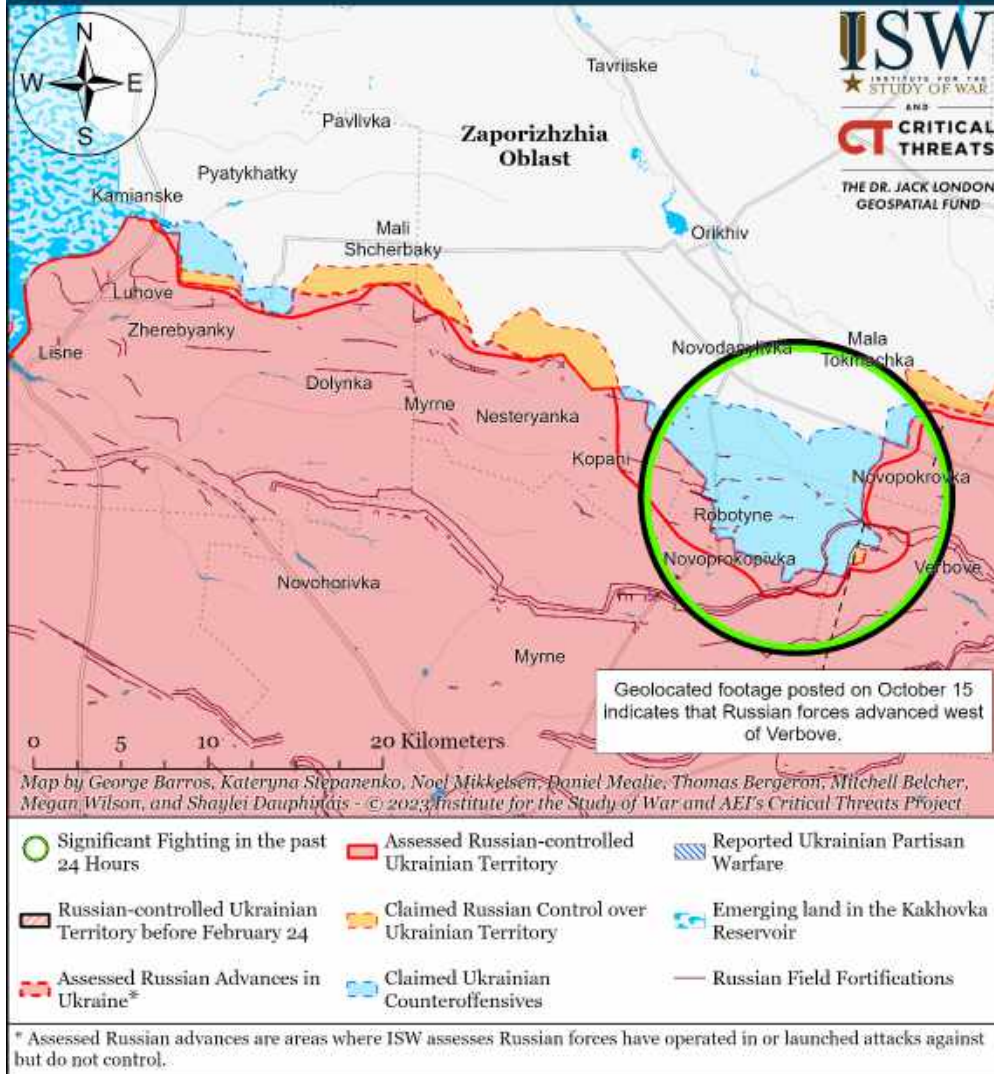
Russian forces continued attacks in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on October 16 and reportedly advanced. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks north of Pryutne, south of Zolota Nyva (12km southeast of Velyka Novosilka), and south of Prechystivka (18km southwest of Velyka Novosilka).[58] A Russian source claimed that Russian forces advanced near Zolota Nyva.[59]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around the Vremivka Salient as of October 16, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



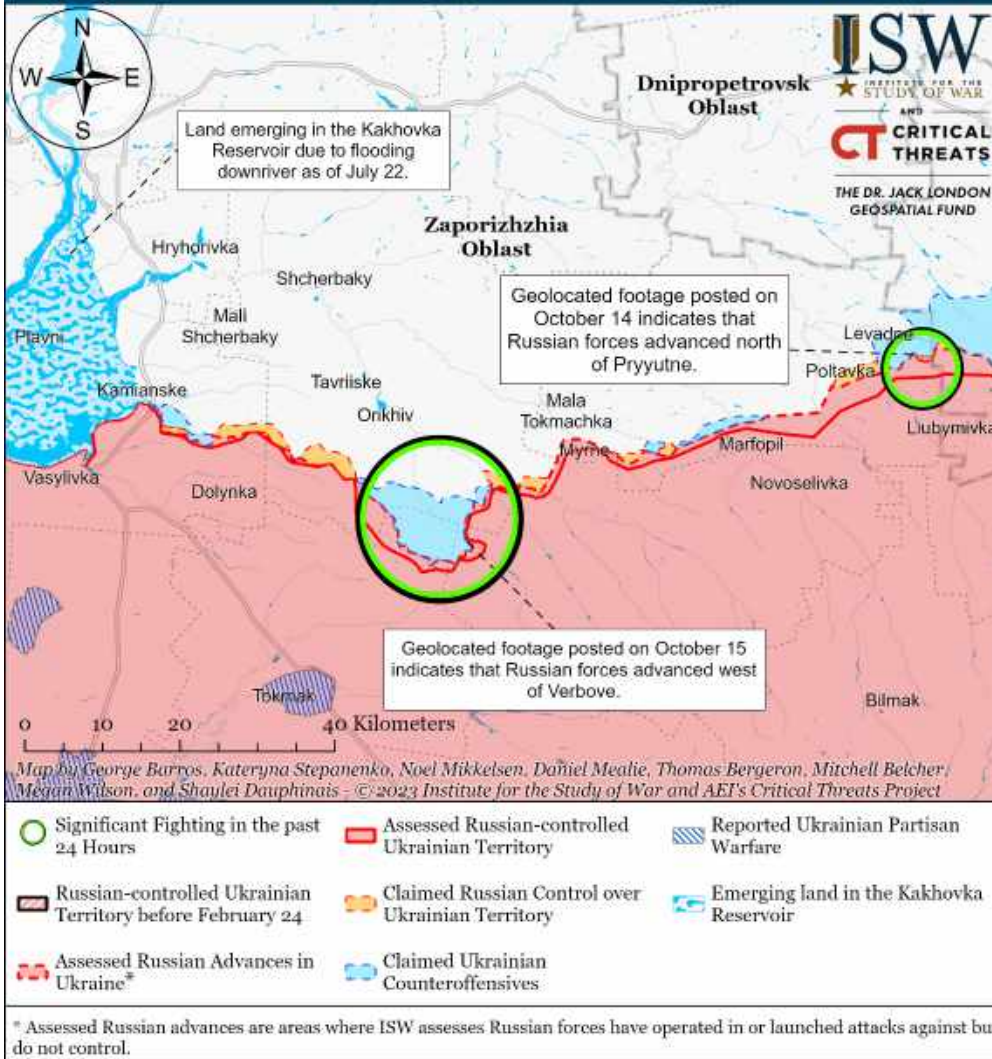
Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast on October 16 but did not make any claimed or confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Melitopol (western Zaporizhia Oblast) direction.[60] Russian sources, including the Russian MoD, claimed that Ukrainian forces launched an unsuccessful mechanized assault on Verbove's western and northwestern outskirts (10km east of Robotyne or 18km southwest of Orikhiv).[61] One Russian milblogger claimed that the intensity of the Ukrainian assault on Verbove subsided due to bad weather.[62] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces are within 200 to 300 meters of Russian positions west of Verbove.[63] A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked in the direction of Kopani (5km northwest of Robotyne or 11km southwest of Orikhiv).[64]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Pyatykhatky and Robotyne as of October 16, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



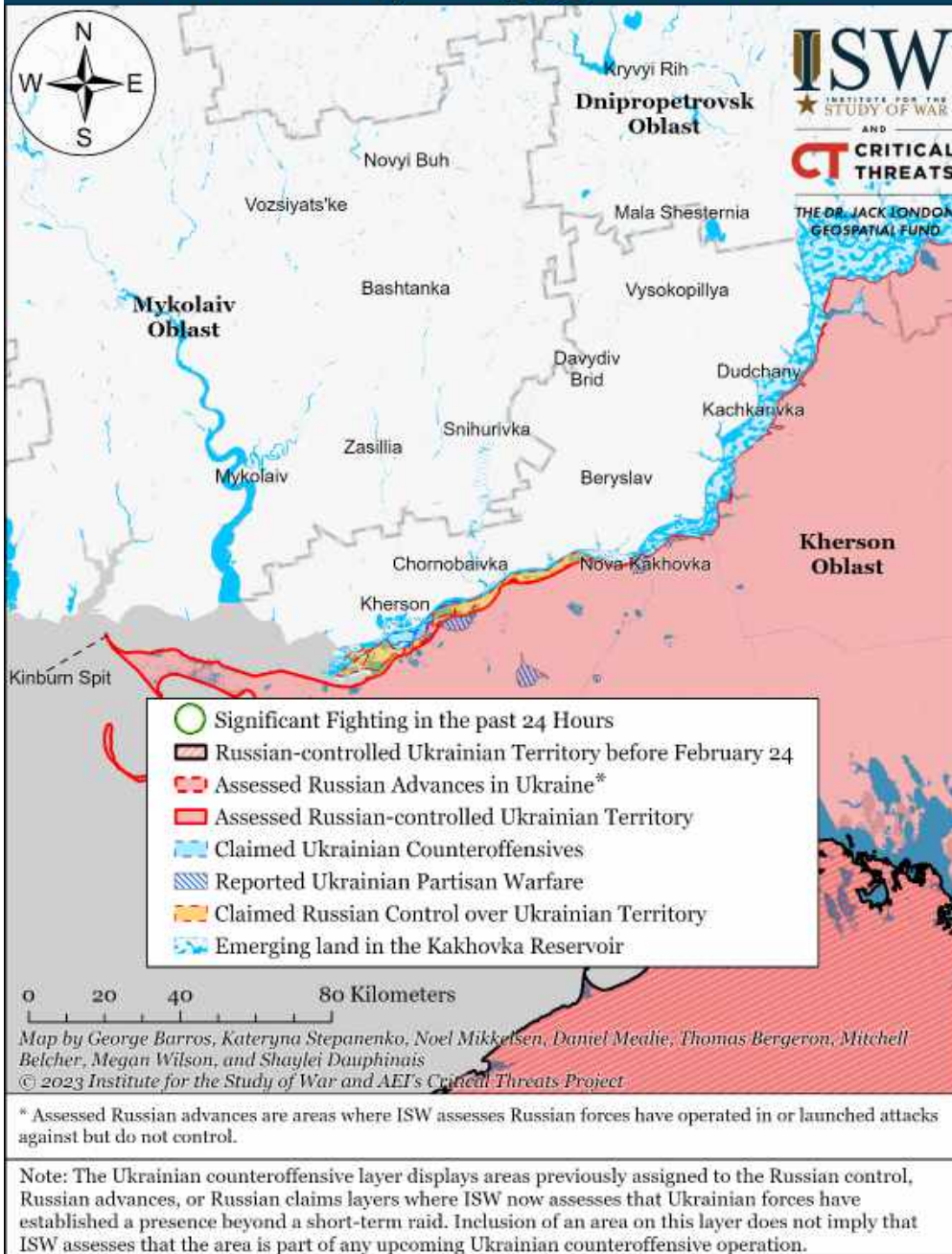
Russian forces continued counterattacks in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast on October 16 and marginally advanced. Geolocated footage published on October 15 indicates that Russian forces marginally advanced northwest of Verbove.[65] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked southwest of Novodanylivka (4km south of Orikhiv), west of Robotyne, and west of Verbove.[66] Russian sources claimed that Russian forces counterattacked along the Kopani-Robotyne-Novopokrovivka-Verbove line (5km northwest to 10km east of Robotyne).[67] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces are advancing along the Robotyne-Verbove line.[68]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhzhia as of October 16, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Russian sources continued to express concern on October 16 over the perceived future threat of Ukrainian amphibious landing in occupied Crimea.[69] A Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed that Russian forces destroyed a barge near the Kinburn Spit in Mykolaiv Oblast, which they claimed Ukrainian forces were planning to use as a “jumping platform” for a future attempt to conduct an amphibious operation in the Black Sea.[70]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of October 16, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts (Russian objective: Expand combat power without conducting general mobilization)

The Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) reported further details on ongoing North Korean weapons shipments to Russia on October 16. RUSI reported on October 16 that satellite imagery from

August through October 2023 indicates that two Russian vessels repeatedly transported hundreds of shipping containers likely containing North Korean armaments between Rajin, North Korea, and Dunai, Russia from mid-August to early October.[71] RUSI reported that Russian authorities rapidly expanded a munitions storage facility 200 kilometers from the Ukrainian border in Tikhoretsk, Krasnodar Krai in early August and that this facility received cargo containers of the same size and color as those transported from Rajin to Dunai.[72]

US National Security Council Spokesperson John Kirby previously stated on October 13 that North Korea provided Russia with as many as 1,000 containers of “equipment and munitions” in “recent weeks” from North Korea to Tikhoretsk, Krasnodar Krai via sea and rail.[73] The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) previously reported on October 8 that satellite imagery indicates that rail traffic between North Korea and Russia also “dramatically” increased since mid-September 2023 and that these containers likely transported ammunition and artillery for the war in Ukraine.[74]

Activities in Russian-occupied areas (Russian objective: Consolidate administrative control of annexed areas; forcibly integrate Ukrainian citizens into Russian sociocultural, economic, military, and governance systems)

The Russian federal government continues efforts to integrate occupied Ukrainian territories into Russia. Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin stated on October 16 that small and medium-sized businesses in occupied Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhia, and Kherson oblasts will be able to participate in Russian federal grant programs for education, medicine, social services, culture, sports, and hotel businesses.[75]

Russian Information Operations and Narratives

Senior Russian officials reiterated boilerplate narratives about the Ukrainian counteroffensive and the Israel-Hamas war during a Russian Security Council meeting on October 16, likely to deter Western support for Ukraine.[76] Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu reiterated his claim from October 15 that Russian forces are conducting an “active defense” and claimed that Russian forces have improved their tactical positions in some places. Shoigu also reiterated standard Russian claims about the Ukrainian counteroffensive having failed. Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov reiterated claims about Western policies bearing responsibility for the Israel-Hamas war.

Putin reiterated standing attempts to portray Russia as a capable, long-term partner to China during an interview with the Chinese Media Corporation on October 16.[77] Putin claimed that current Russian-Chinese relations have developed over the past two decades and are based on goodwill and national interests. Putin also expressed support for China’s One Belt, One Road initiative. Putin also reiterated longstanding Kremlin narratives falsely claiming that the West caused the war in Ukraine and that Russia remains open to meaningful negotiations.

Russian officials continue efforts to downplay the effects of the Russian war in Ukraine on domestic society and avoid fully shifting domestic society to a wartime footing. Russian Finance Minister Anton Siluanov claimed that the fulfillment of social obligations is one of the highest priority areas in the Russian federal budget, 30.5 percent of which is allocated to social issues.[78] Siluanov stated that defense capability is another priority area of the Russian federal budget but that the federal budget is not a military budget.

Significant activity in Belarus (Russian efforts to increase its military presence in Belarus and further integrate Belarus into Russian-favorable frameworks and Wagner Group activity in Belarus)

The Belarusian Ministry of Defense (MoD) announced on October 16 that the next group of Belarusian maneuver elements had begun a combat readiness check.[79] The readiness check includes moving military personnel and equipment along roads in Minsk, Grodno, Brest, and Vitebsk oblasts for combat training. The Belarusian MoD stated that Belarusian forces inspected the equipment of tank elements of the 6th and 120th Separate Mechanized Brigades.[80]

ISW will continue to report daily observed Russian and Belarusian military activity in Belarus as part of ongoing Kremlin efforts to increase their control over Belarus and other Russian actions in Belarus.

Note: ISW does not receive any classified material from any source, uses only publicly available information, and draws extensively on Russian, Ukrainian, and Western reporting and social media as well as commercially available satellite imagery and other geospatial data as the basis for these reports. References to all sources used are provided in the endnotes of each update.



[1] <https://www.facebook.com/butusov.yuriy/posts/pfbidoRijKc3g6qCaBVppoMSBXChruuFRQ29frC7c5iDK73r2FkCvueTFVt8rf4ss7EZcl>

[2] https://t.me/dva_majors/26599; <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1312>; <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1305>; https://t.me/dva_majors/26277; https://t.me/dva_majors/25412;

[3] <https://x.com/small1ospace/status/1713925604486135828?s=20>; <https://x.com/klinger66/status/1713961389025333655?s=20>

[4] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2iQf74biFrr1Y8BeJoFNZYU1GPU3vLP7tcc6maMhfhiXTHHipJXdErr38FLff4TTl>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido53GuPg9AsPXM5wPtqyWhiJXX27kQgjqKkHGtm52QKLYG6VZXHHKnEvZRimq22FPNl>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2oY36STrZoyRnUs7jgeonYGc6b7MNsVnapp6HdNb5tSLpYL4iu74MoK4RQ6W5YVuwI>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2KB1GguvTepzGe9M1QrsDEVjxmAoaCmcygQLpdpkSDUUPZQ3iSCAwBx9zCFTdib6Ul>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoujELpjMgL3r8V3LywDDpQbRUJiGEupPtqCwktFuGPedSs5XvWrgSmoNDZ7UwJ66ml>

[5] <https://t.me/rybar/53288>; <https://twitter.com/Tatarigami-UA/status/1713921466910081372>; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4043>; <https://t.me/frontbird/4040> ; https://t.me/vdv_ZA_teplinsky/163

[6] <http://kremlin dot ru/events/president/news/72510>; <https://www.rbc dot ru/politics/16/10/2023/652d33d29a7947f4ab40a6a7>

[7] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoujELpjMgL3r8V3LywDDpQbRUJiGEupPtqCwktFuGPEdSs5XvWrgSmoNDZ7UwJ66ml>

[8] <https://t.me/frontbird/4037>; https://t.me/dva_majors/27497 ; https://t.me/dva_majors/27500 ; https://t.me/boris_rozhin/100980 ; https://t.me/mod_russia/31522 ; https://t.me/mod_russia/31528 ; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4047> ;

<https://t.me/rybar/53288>; <https://t.me/wargonzo/15803>; https://t.me/dva_majors/27474

[9] https://t.me/dva_majors/27474 ; https://t.me/vdv_ZA_teplinsky/149 ; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4030>

[10] <https://deti dot gov.ru/uploads/magic/ru-RU/Document-o-258-src-1697376249.7297.pdf>

[11] <https://deti dot gov.ru/uploads/magic/ru-RU/Document-o-258-src-1697376249.7297.pdf>

[12] <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/qatar-return-three-ukrainian-children-russia-after-repatriation-talks-2023-10-16/> ; <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/10/16/ukraine-children-released-russia-qatar/>

[13] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-july-31-2023> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar070323> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar011223> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar012823> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar020623> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-7-2023> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-5-2023> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-30-2023> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-25-2023> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-23-2023> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-20-2023> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-17-2023> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-12-2023>

[14] https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Oct%202%20Russian%20Offensive%20Campaign%20Assessment%20PDF_o.pdf; https://t.me/philologist_zov/594

[15] https://t.me/philologist_zov/594

[16] https://t.me/philologist_zov/593

[17] <https://t.me/wehearfromyanina/2856>

[18] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2oY36STrZoyRnUs7jgeonYGc6b7MNsVnapp6HdNb5tSLpYL4iu74MoK4RQ6W5YVuwI>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2yatfuLWrMjqA1rw48fjysxTAGpYdGAZhYUFMTqRtrsb8dEYkmToNYKqBzNiG1V4Xl>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoujELpjMgL3r8V3LywDDpQbRUJiGEupPtqCwktFuGPEdSs5XvWrgSmoNDZ7UwJ66ml>

[19] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2yatfuLWrMjqA1rw48fjysxTAGpYdGAZhYUFMTqRtrsb8dEYkmToNYKqBzNiG1V4Xl>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoujELpjMgL3r8V3LywDDpQbRUJiGEupPtqCwktFuGPEdSs5XvWrgSmoNDZ7UwJ66ml>

[20] <https://t.me/poltavskaOVA/10462> ; <https://t.me/bbcrossian/54248>; <https://t.me/bbcrossian/54255> ; <https://t.me/bbcrossian/54257>; <https://t.me/kirovogradskaODA/7154>; <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/55022>; <https://t.me/readovkanews/67832> ; <https://t.me/bbcrossian/54255>

[21] https://t.me/mod_russia/31522 ; <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/55022>;
<https://t.me/readovkanews/67831>

[22] <https://t.me/kommunist/18761> ; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4038>;
<https://t.me/severrealii/20701>

[23] <https://meduza dot io/en/news/2023/10/12/latvia-to-close-only-land-crossing-for-ukrainians-to-enter-russia-through-third-country>

[24] <https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Oct%207%20Russian%20Offensive%20Campaign%20Assessment%20PDF.pdf>

[25] <https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Oct%207%20Russian%20Offensive%20Campaign%20Assessment%20PDF.pdf>

[26] <https://legalpetition dot ru/calltoaction>; <https://meduza dot io/news/2023/10/16/rossiyskie-advokaty-prizvali-k-zabastovke> ; <https://t.me/astrapress/40492>

[27] <https://legalpetition dot ru/calltoaction>

[28] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar101323>

[29] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar072523>

[30] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15803>

[31] <https://t.me/rybar/53297>; <https://t.me/rybar/53288> ; <https://t.me/wargonzo/15803>: <https://t.me/wargonzo/15803>; https://t.me/smotri_z/21240
; <https://t.me/NeoficialniyBeZsonoV/30083>; <https://t.me/wargonzo/15811>;
<https://t.me/rybar/53290>

[32] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoujELpjMgL3r8V3LywDDpQbRUJiGEupPtqCwktFuGPEdSs5XvWrgSmoNDZ7UwJ66ml>;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2oY36STrZoyRnUs7jgeonYGc6b7MNsVnapp6HdNb5tSLpYL4iu74MoK4RQ6W5YVuwI>

p6HdNb5tSLpYL4iu74MoK4RQ6W5YVuwI; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02KB1GguvTczpGe9M1QrsDEVjxmAoaCmcygQLpdpkSDUUPZQ3iSCAwBx9zCFTdib6Ul>

[33] <https://armyinform.com dot ua/2023/10/16/vtrata-bahmuta-dlya-rosiyan-mozhe-buty-tochkoyu-nadlomu-dlya-kaskadnogo-obvalu-frontu-petro-chernyk/>

[34] https://t.me/mod_russia/31521 ; https://t.me/mod_russia/31524;
https://t.me/mod_russia/31525

[35] https://t.me/dva_majors/27474; <https://t.me/rybar/53288>

[36] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02oY36STrZoyRnUs7jgeonYGc6b7MNsVnapp6HdNb5tSLpYL4iu74MoK4RQ6W5YVuwI>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02KB1GguvTczpGe9M1QrsDEVjxmAoaCmcygQLpdpkSDUUPZQ3iSCAwBx9zCFTdib6Ul>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoujELpjMgL3r8V3LywDDpQbRUJiGEupPtqCwktFuGPEdSs5XvWrgSmoNDZ7UwJ66ml>

[37] <https://armyinform.com dot ua/2023/10/16/syly-oborony-prodovzhuyut-nastup-nabahmutskomu-napryamku-illya-yevlash/>

[38] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15811>

[39] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02oY36STrZoyRnUs7jgeonYGc6b7MNsVnapp6HdNb5tSLpYL4iu74MoK4RQ6W5YVuwI>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02KB1GguvTczpGe9M1QrsDEVjxmAoaCmcygQLpdpkSDUUPZQ3iSCAwBx9zCFTdib6Ul>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoujELpjMgL3r8V3LywDDpQbRUJiGEupPtqCwktFuGPEdSs5XvWrgSmoNDZ7UwJ66ml>

[40] <https://x.com/small1ospace/status/1713925604486135828?s=20>; <https://x.com/klinger66/status/1713961389025333655?s=20>

[41] <https://t.me/rybar/53288>; <https://t.me/rybar/53290>; <https://t.me/kommunist/18757>; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4029>; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4043>

[42] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15803>

[43] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15811>

[44] <https://t.me/readovkanews/67830>; https://t.me/dva_majors/27496; https://t.me/dva_majors/27507; https://t.me/dva_majors/27507

[45] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02oY36STrZoyRnUs7jgeonYGc6b7MNsVnapp6HdNb5tSLpYL4iu74MoK4RQ6W5YVuwI>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02KB1GguvTczpGe9M1QrsDEVjxmAoaCmcygQLpdpkSDUUPZQ3iSCAwBx9zCFTdib6Ul>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoujELpjMgL3r8V3LywDDpQbRUJiGEupPtqCwktFuGPEdSs5XvWrgSmoNDZ7UwJ66ml>

[46] https://twitter.com/Tatarigami_UA/status/1713921466910081372

- [47] <https://t.me/rybar/53288>; <https://t.me/wargonzo/15803>; https://t.me/dva_majors/27474
- [48] https://t.me/dva_majors/27474; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4029>
- [49] <https://t.me/sumyliketop/32697>; <https://t.me/usinfantryman1/15466>; <https://x.com/giK1893/status/1713507482562134098?s=20>; <https://x.com/giK1893/status/1713507600417919089?s=20>; <https://x.com/giK1893/status/1713508087733088365?s=20>
- [50] https://x.com/front_ukrainian/status/1713882628443553931?s=20; <https://x.com/klinger66/status/1713900840925176201?s=20>; https://t.me/WarArchive_ua/6213 ; <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1246185632733774>
- [51] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoujELpjMgL3r8V3LywDDpQbRUJiGEUpPtqCwktFuGPEdSs5XvWrgSmoNDZ7UwJ66ml>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2oY36STrZoyRnUs7jgeonYGc6b7MNsVnapp6HdNb5tSLpYL4iu74MoK4RQ6W5YVuwI>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2KB1GguyTczGe9M1QrsDEVjxmAoaCmcygQLpdpkSDUUPZQ3iSCAwBx9zCFTdib6U1>
- [52] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15803>
- [53] https://t.me/mod_russia/31517
- [54] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15804>
- [55] https://t.me/batalyon_vostok/220
- [56] <https://t.me/readovkanews/67830>
- [57] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15803>
- [58] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoujELpjMgL3r8V3LywDDpQbRUJiGEUpPtqCwktFuGPEdSs5XvWrgSmoNDZ7UwJ66ml> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2oY36STrZoyRnUs7jgeonYGc6b7MNsVnapp6HdNb5tSLpYL4iu74MoK4RQ6W5YVuwI>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2KB1GguyTczGe9M1QrsDEVjxmAoaCmcygQLpdpkSDUUPZQ3iSCAwBx9zCFTdib6U1>
- [59] <https://t.me/vrogov/12516>
- [60] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2oY36STrZoyRnUs7jgeonYGc6b7MNsVnapp6HdNb5tSLpYL4iu74MoK4RQ6W5YVuwI>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2KB1GguyTczGe9M1QrsDEVjxmAoaCmcygQLpdpkSDUUPZQ3iSCAwBx9zCFTdib6U1>
- [61] <https://t.me/frontbird/4037>; https://t.me/dva_majors/27497 ; https://t.me/dva_majors/27500 ; https://t.me/boris_rozhin/100980 ; https://t.me/mod_russia/31522 ; https://t.me/mod_russia/31528 ; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4047>
- [62] <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4051>

[63] https://t.me/dva_majors/27474 ; https://t.me/vdv_ZA_teplinsky/149 ; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4030>

[64] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15803> ; <https://t.me/wargonzo/15804>

[65] <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/54992>

[66] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoujELpjMgL3r8V3LywDDpQbRUJiGEupPtqCwktFuGPEdSs5XvWrgSmoNDZ7UwJ66ml> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02oY36STrZoyRnUs7jgeonYGc6b7MNsVnap6HdNb5tSLpYL4iu74MoK4RQ6W5YVuwI> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02KB1GguvTczGe9M1QrsDEVjxmAoaCmcygQLpdpkSDUUPZQ3iSCAwBx9zCFTdib6Ul>

[67] <https://t.me/batalyon15/3142> ; <https://t.me/wargonzo/15803> ; https://t.me/dva_majors/27474 ; <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/55024> ; <https://t.me/wargonzo/15804>

[68] https://t.me/rusich_army/11353

[69] <https://t.me/rybar/53299> ; https://t.me/dva_majors/27474 ; https://t.me/SALDO_VGA/1332 ; https://t.me/VGA_Kherson/14747

[70] <https://t.me/rybar/53292>

[71] <https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/report-orient-express-north-koreas-clandestine-supply-route-russia>

[72] <https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/report-orient-express-north-koreas-clandestine-supply-route-russia>

[73] <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2023/10/13/north-korea-russia-weapons-ukraine/>

[74] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounders/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-8-2023>

[75] <http://government dot ru/news/49790/>

[76] kremlin dot ru/events/president/news/72510

[77] <http://www.kremlin dot ru/events/president/news/72508> ; <https://www.rbc dot ru/politics/16/10/2023/652cb74d9a794784b767bf3f?from=newsfeed> ;

[78] <https://tass dot ru/ekonomika/19025979> ; <https://meduza dot io/news/2023/10/16/siluanov-skazal-chto-rossiyskiy-byudzheth-ne-voennyi-a-sotsialnyy-i-pobeschal-tri-goda-ne-povyshat-nalogi>

[79] <https://t.me/modmilby/32966>

[80] <https://t.me/modmilby/32976> ; <https://t.me/modmilby/32969>